BEACON LIGHTS OF HISTORY.

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VOLUME IV.

PART I.

GREAT WOMEN.

PART II.

GREAT RULERS.

(TABLE OF CONTENTS FOR PART II FOLLOWS PAGE 390.)

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PART I.

GREAT WOMEN.

CONTENTS.

HÉLOÏSE.

Love.

	Page
Love, the flower of Eden	23
The two Venuses of Socrates	24
The Venus Urania	25
The memory of Héloïse cherished	27
Her birth and education	28
Her extraordinary gifts	29
Her aspirations	30
Peter Abélard	32
His wonderful genius	32
His early scholastic triumphs	33
Abélard at Paris	35
His wit and flippancy	36
His scepticism	38
His successes	39
His love for Héloïse	40
His mad infatuation	41
Scandal of the intimacy	44
Disinterestedness of Héloïse	45
Secret marriage of Abélard and Héloïse	46
Marriage discovered	47
Retirement of Héloïse and Abélard to separate convents	48
His renewed labors	49
His brilliant success	49
Persecution of Abélard	50

PAGE

Letters to Héloïse 51
Héloïse cannot conquer her love 54
Her high social position 54
Her blameless life 55
Loves of Héloïse and Abélard analyzed 56
Greatness of sentiment 57
Last days of Abélard 60
His retreat to Cluny 62
Peter the Venerable 64
Grief of Héloïse 65

JOAN OF ARC.

HEROIC WOMEN.

Heroic qualities of women in the Middle Ages 69
Extraordinary appearance of Joan of Arc 71
Her early days 72
Her visions 73
Critical state of France at this period 74
Appreciated by Joan 76
Who resolves to come to the rescue of her king and country 77
Difficulties which surrounded her 78
Her services finally accepted 79
Her faith in her mission 80
Her pure and religious life 81
Joan sets out for the deliverance of Orleans 84
Succeeds in entering the city 85
Joan raises the siege of Orleans 86
Admiration of the people for her 87
Veneration for women among the Germanic nations . . . 88
Joan marches to the siege of Rheims 89
Difficulty of the enterprise 90
Hesitation of the king 91
Rheims and other cities taken 92

PAGE
Coronation of Charles 92
Mission of the Maid fulfilled 92
Successive military mistakes 94
Capture of Joan 95
Indifference and ingratitude of the King 95
Trial of Joan for heresy and witchcraft 96
Cruelty of the English to her 97
The diabolical persecution 98
Martyrdom of Joan 101
Tardy justice to her memory 102
Effects of the martyrdom 104

SAINT THERESA.

RELIGIOUS ENTHUSIASM.

Pleasures of the body the aim of Paganism 110
Aim of Christianity to elevate the soul 113
Mistakes of monastic life 114
The age of Saint Theresa 116
Her birth and early training 117
Mediæval piety 118
Theresa sent to a convent to be educated 119
Her poor health 119
Religious despotism of the Middle Ages 120
Their gloom and repulsiveness 121
Faith and repentance divorced 123
Catholic theology 124
Theresa becomes a nun 125
Her serious illness 126
Her religious experience 128
The Confessions of Saint Augustine 130
The religious emancipation of Theresa 130
Her canticles 131
Her religious rhapsodies 13*

Page
Theresa seeks to found a convent 133
Opposition to her 134
Her discouragements 135
Her final success 136
Reformation of the Carmelite order 136
Convent of St. Joseph 137
Death of Saint Theresa 137
Writings of Saint Theresa 138
Her submission to authority 139
Her independence 139
Compared with Madame Guyon 139
Her posthumous influence 140

MADAME DE MAINTENON.

The Political Woman.

Birth of Madame de Maintenon 146
Her early life 146
Marriage with Scarron 148
Governess of Montespan's children 150
Introduction to the King 151
Her incipient influence over him 151
Contrast of Maintenon with Montespan 152
Friendship of the King for Madame de Maintenon . . 153
Made mistress of the robes to the Dauphiness . . . 153
Private marriage with Louis XIV. 154
Reasons for its concealment 155
Unbounded power of Madame de Maintenon 156
Grandeur of Versailles 157
Great men of the court 158
The King's love of pomp and ceremony 159
Sources of his power 160
His great mistakes 161
The penalties he reaped 162

PAGE

Secret of Madame de Maintenon's influence 164
Her mistakes 165
Religious intolerance 166
Revocation of the Edict of Nantes 167
Persecution of the Protestants 168
Influence of Bossuet 170
Foundation of the school of St. Cyr 173
Influence of Madame de Maintenon on education 173
" " " on morals 174
" " " on the court 175
Her reign a usurpation 176
Her greatness of character 177

SARAH, DUCHESS OF MARLBOROUGH.

The Woman of the World.

The Duchess of Marlborough compared with Madame de Maintenon 181
Birth and early influence 182
John Churchill 183
Marriage of Churchill and Sarah Jennings 184
Colonel Churchill made a peer 185
The Princess Anne 185
Lady Churchill 186
Their friendship 187
Coronation of William and Mary 187
Character of William III. 188
Treason of the Earl of Marlborough 189
Energy and sagacity of the Queen 189
Naval victory of La Hogue 189
Temporary retirement of Marlborough 190
Death of the Duke of Gloucester 191
Marlborough, Captain-General 191

PAGE

Death of William III. 191
Accession of Anne 191
Power of Marlborough 192
Lord Godolphin 192
Ascendency of Lady Marlborough 193
Her ambition 193
Her pride 195
Renewal of war with Louis XIV. 196
Marlborough created a duke 197
Whigs and Tories 197
Harley, Earl of Oxford 198
His intrigues 199
Abigail Hill 200
Supplants the Duchess of Marlborough 200
Coolness between the Queen and Duchess 201
Battle of Ramillies 201
Miss Hill marries Mr. Masham 202
Declining influence of the Duchess 203
Her anger and revenge 204
Power of Harley 204
Disgrace of the Duchess 206
The Tories in power 207
Dismissal of Marlborough 207
Bolingbroke 208
Swift 208
His persecution of the Duchess 211
Addison 212
Voluntary exile of Marlborough 215
Unhappiness of the Duchess 216
Death of Queen Anne 217
Return of Marlborough to power 217
Attacked by paralysis 217
Death of Marlborough 218
His vast wealth 218

PAGE
Declining days of the Duchess 219
Her character 220
Her death 222
Reflections on her career 223

MADAME RÉCAMIER.

THE WOMAN OF SOCIETY.

Queens of society first seen in Italy 226
Provençal poetry in its connection with chivalrous sentiments 228
Chivalry the origin of society 229
Society in Paris in the 17th Century 230
Marquise de Rambouillet 230
Her *salons* 231
Mademoiselle de Scudéri 232
Early days of Madame Récamier 233
Her marriage 234
Her remarkable beauty and grace 235
Her *salons* 235
Her popularity 235
Courted by Napoleon 236
Loss of property 238
Friendship with Madame de Staël 240
Incurs the hatred of Napoleon 241
Friendship with Ballanche 242
Madame Récamier in Italy 243
Return to Paris 244
Duke of Montmorency 245
Seclusion of Madame Récamier 245
Her intimate friends 245
Friendship with Châteaubriand 246
His gifts and high social position 246
His retirement from political life 248

PAGE
His old age soothed by Récamier 249
Her lovely disposition 250
Her beautiful old age 253
Her death 254
Her character 254
Remarks on society 255
Sources of its fascinations 256

MADAME DE STAËL.

WOMAN IN LITERATURE.

Literature in the 18th Century 265
Rise of Madame de Staël 267
Her precocity 268
Her powers of conversation 269
Her love of society 270
Her marriage 271
Hatred of Napoleon 273
Her banishment 274
Her residence in Switzerland 274
Travels in Germany 275
Her work on literature 276
Her book on Germany 279
Its great merits 280
German philosophy 280
Visit to Italy 282
Sismondi 282
"Corinne" 284
Its popularity 285
A description of Italy 286
Marriage with Rocca 287
Madame de Staël in England 288
Her honors 289
Return to Paris 290

PAGE

Incense offered to her 291
Her amazing éclat 291
Her death 291
Her merits as an author 292
Inaugurated a new style in literature 292
Her followers 293
Her influence 294
Literary women 295
Their future 295

HANNAH MORE.

EDUCATION OF WOMAN.

Progress of female education 300
Youth of Hannah More 304
Her accomplishments 304
Teaches school 304
Intimacy with great men 305
Shines in society 306
Wearied of it 310
Her ridicule of fashionable gatherings called society . . 310
Retirement to Cowslip Green 311
Her patrons and friends 312
Labors in behalf of the poor 314
Foundation of schools 315
Works on female education 316
Their good influence 318
Their leading ideas 321
Christian education 323
Removal to Barley Wood 325
Views of society 325
Her distinguished visitors 326
"Cœlebs in Search of a Wife" 326

PAGE

"Christian Morals" 327
Her laboring at the age of eighty 327
The quiet elegance of her life 328
Removal to Clifton 329
Happy old age 329
Death 330
Exalted character 330
Remarks on female education 331
The sphere of woman 335
What is woman to do? 337

GEORGE ELIOT.

Woman as Novelist.

Notable eras of modern civilization 345
Nineteenth Century, the age of novelists 346
Scott, Fielding, Dickens, Thackeray 347
Bulwer; women novelists 348
Charlotte Brontë, Harriet Beecher Stowe, George Eliot . 349
Early life of Marian Evans 350
Appearance, education, and acquirements 351
Change in religious views; German translations; Continental travel 352
Westminster Review; literary and scientific men 353
Her alliance with George Henry Lewes 354
Her life with him 355
Literary labors 356
First work of fiction, "Amos Barton," with criticism upon her qualities as a novelist, illustrated by the story . . . 357
"Mr. Gilfil's Love Story" 360
"Adam Bede" 363
"The Mill on the Floss" 367
"Silas Marner" 370

PAGE
"Romola" 371
"Felix Holt" 377
"Middlemarch" 379
"Daniel Deronda" 381
"Theophrastus Such" 384
General characteristics of George Eliot 385
Death of Mr. Lewes; her marriage with Mr. Cross . . . 386
Lofty position of George Eliot in literature 387
Religious views and philosophical opinions 388
Her failure as a teacher of morals 389
Regret at her abandonment of Christianity 390

HÉLOÏSE.

A. D. 1101–1164.

LOVE.

BEACON LIGHTS OF HISTORY.

HÉLOÏSE.

LOVE.

WHEN Adam and Eve were expelled from Paradise, they yet found one flower, wherever they wandered, blooming in perpetual beauty. This flower represents a great certitude, without which few would be happy, — subtile, mysterious, inexplicable, — a great boon recognized alike by poets and moralists, Pagan and Christian; yea, identified not only with happiness, but human existence, and pertaining to the soul in its highest aspirations. Allied with the transient and the mortal, even with the weak and corrupt, it is yet immortal in its nature and lofty in its aims, — at once a passion, a sentiment, and an inspiration.

To attempt to describe woman without this element of our complex nature, which constitutes her peculiar fascination, is like trying to act the tragedy of Hamlet without Hamlet himself, — an absurdity; a picture without a central figure, a novel without a heroine, a religion without a sacrifice. My subject is not with-

out its difficulties. The passion or sentiment I describe is degrading when perverted, as it is exalting when pure. Yet it is not vice I would paint, but virtue; not weakness, but strength; not the transient, but the permanent; not the mortal, but the immortal, — all that is ennobling in the aspiring soul.

"Socrates," says Legouvé, "who caught glimpses of everything that he did not clearly define, uttered one day to his disciples these beautiful words: 'There are two Venuses: one celestial, called Urania, the heavenly, who presides over all pure and spiritual affections; and the other Polyhymnia, the terrestrial, who excites sensual and gross desires.'" The history of love is the eternal struggle between these two divinities, — the one seeking to elevate and the other to degrade. Plato, for the first time, in his beautiful hymn to the Venus Urania, displayed to men the unknown image of love, — the educator and the moralist, — so that grateful ages have consecrated it by his name. Centuries rolled away, and among the descendants of Teutonic barbarians a still lovelier and more ideal sentiment burst out from the lips of the Christian Dante, kindled by the adoration of his departed Beatrice. And as she courses from star to star, explaining to him the mysteries, the transported poet exclaims: —

"Ah, all the tongues which the Muses have inspired could not tell the thousandth part of the beauty of the smile of

Beatrice as she presented me to the celestial group, exclaiming, 'Thou art redeemed!' O woman, in whom lives all my hope, who hast deigned to leave for my salvation thy footsteps on the throne of the Eternal, thou hast redeemed me from slavery to liberty; now earth has no more dangers for me. I cherish the image of thy purity in my bosom, that in my last hour, acceptable in thine eyes, my soul may leave my body."

Thus did Dante impersonate the worship of Venus Urania, — spiritual tenderness overcoming sensual desire. Thus faithful to the traditions of this great poet did the austere Michael Angelo do reverence to the virtues of Vittoria Colonna. Thus did the lofty Corneille present in his Pauline a divine model of the love which inspires great deeds and accompanies great virtues. Thus did Shakspeare, in his portrait of Portia, show the blended generosity and simplicity of a woman's soul: —

> "For you [my Lord Bassanio]
> I would be trebled twenty times myself;
> A thousand times more fair, ten thousand times more rich;"

or, in his still more beautiful delineation of Juliet, paint an absorbing devotion: —

> "My bounty is as boundless as the sea,
> My love as deep; the more I give to thee,
> The more I have, for both are infinite."

Thus did Milton, in his transcendent epic, show how

a Paradise was regained when woman gave her generous sympathy to man, and reproduced for all coming ages the image of Spiritual Love, — the inamorata of Dante and Petrarch, the inspired and consoling guide.

But the muse of the poets, even when sanctified by Christianity, never sang such an immortal love as the Middle Ages in sober prose have handed down in the history of Héloïse, — the struggle between the two Venuses of Socrates, and the final victory of Urania, though not till after the temporary triumph of Polyhymnia, — the inamorata of earth clad in the vestments of a sanctified recluse, and purified by the chastisements of Heaven. "Saint Theresa dies longing to join her divine spouse; but Saint Theresa is only a Héloïse looking towards heaven." Héloïse has an earthly idol, but her devotion has in it all the elements of a supernatural fervor, — the crucifixion of self in the glory of him she adored. He was not worthy of her idolatry; but she thought that he was. Admiration for genius exalted sentiment into adoration, and imagination invested the object of love with qualities superhuman.

Nations do not spontaneously keep alive the memory of those who have disgraced them. It is their heroes and heroines whose praises they sing, — those only who have shone in the radiance of genius and virtue. They forget defects, if these are counterbalanced by grand

services or great deeds, — if their sons and daughters have shed lustre on the land which gave them birth. But no lustre survives egotism or vice; it only lasts when it gilds a noble life. There is no glory in the name of Jezebel, or Cleopatra, or Catherine de' Medici, brilliant and fascinating as were those queens; but there is glory in the memory of Héloïse. There is no woman in French history of whom the nation is prouder; revered, in spite of early follies, by the most austere and venerated saints of her beclouded age, and hallowed by the tributes of succeeding centuries for those sentiments which the fires of passion were scarcely able to tarnish, for an exalted soul which eclipsed the brightness of uncommon intellectual faculties, for a depth of sympathy and affection which have become embalmed in the heart of the world, and for a living piety which blazes all the more conspicuously from the sins which she expiated by such bitter combats. She was human in her impulses, but divine in her graces; one of those characters for whom we cannot help feeling the deepest sympathy and the profoundest admiration, — a character that has its contradictions, like that warrior-bard who was after God's own heart, in spite of his crimes, because his soul thirsted for the beatitudes of heaven, and was bound in loving loyalty to his Maker, against whom he occasionally sinned by force of mortal passions, but whom he never ignored

or forgot, and against whom he never persistently rebelled.

As a semi-warlike but religious age produced a David, with his strikingly double nature perpetually at war with itself and looking for aid to God, — his "sun," his "shield," his hope, and joy, — so an equally unenlightened but devout age produced a Héloïse, the impersonation of sympathy, disinterestedness, suffering, forgiveness, and resignation. I have already described this dark, sad, turbulent, superstitious, ignorant period of strife and suffering, yet not without its poetic charms and religious aspirations; when the convent and the castle were its chief external features, and when a life of meditation was as marked as a life of bodily activity, as if old age and youth were battling for supremacy, — a very peculiar state of society, in which we see the loftiest speculations of the intellect and the highest triumphs of faith blended with puerile enterprises and misdirected physical forces.

In this semi-barbaric age Héloïse was born, about the year 1101. Nobody knew who was her father, although it was surmised that he belonged to the illustrious family of the Montmorencies, which traced an unbroken lineage to Pharimond, before the time of Clovis. She lived with her uncle Fulbert, who was a worldly-wise old canon of the Cathedral Church of Notre Dame in Paris. He called her his niece · but

whether niece, or daughter, or adopted child, was a mystery. She was of extraordinary beauty, though remarkable for expression rather than for regularity of feature. In intellect she was precocious and brilliant; but the qualities of a great soul shone above the radiance of her wit. She was bright, amiable, affectionate, and sympathetic, — the type of an interesting woman. The ecclesiastic was justly proud of her, and gave to her all the education the age afforded. Although not meaning to be a nun, she was educated in a neighboring convent, — for convents, even in those times, were female seminaries, containing many inmates who never intended to take the veil. But the convent in those days, as it is now, was not an inviting place for brilliant women who were not at the same time deeply religious. To all who took its vows, the convent necessarily and logically — as a product of a remarkable religious movement — was a retreat from the world; and yet it was the only place where a woman could be educated.

Héloïse, it would seem, made extraordinary attainments, and spoke Latin as well as her native tongue. She won universal admiration, and in due time, at the age of eighteen, returned to her uncle's house, on the banks of the Seine, on the island called the Cité, where the majestic cathedral and the castle of the king towered above the rude houses of the people. Adjoining the church were the cloisters of the monks and the

Episcopal School, the infant university of Paris, over which the Archdeacon of Paris, William of Champeaux, presided in scholastic dignity and pride, — next to the bishop the most influential man in Paris. The teachers of this school, or masters and doctors as they were called, and the priests of the cathedral formed the intellectual aristocracy of the city, and they were frequent visitors at the house of Fulbert the canon. His niece, as she was presumed to be, was the great object of attraction. There never was a time when intellectual Frenchmen have not bowed down to cultivated women. Héloïse, though only a girl, was a queen of such society as existed in the city, albeit more admired by men than women, — poetical, imaginative, witty, ready, frank, with a singular appreciation of intellectual excellence, dazzled by literary fame, and looking up to those brilliant men who worshipped her.

In truth, Héloïse was a prodigy. But that is not all; she had the good fortune to be surrounded in her youth with companionship given to few women of her time. Already students were flocking to Paris from all over Europe. Later they came, literally by the thousands, and then, as they broke away from the Monastic and Episcopal schools, there arose the University of Paris, the mother of all modern Universities. In this atmosphere Héloïse blossomed into young womanhood. She had risen above her environment, and her very soul panted

for a greater intellectual freedom and a deeper sympathy than these students could give. She pined in society. She was isolated by her own superiority,—superior not merely in the radiance of the soul, but in the treasures of the mind. Nor could her companions comprehend her greatness, even while they were fascinated by her presence. She dazzled them by her personal beauty perhaps more than by her wit; for even mediæval priests could admire an expansive brow, a deep blue eye, *doux et penétrant*, a mouth varying with unconscious sarcasms, teeth strong and regular, a neck long and flexible, and shoulders sloping and gracefully moulded, over which fell ample and golden locks; while the attitude, the complexion, the blush, the thrilling accent, and the gracious smile, languor, and passion depicted on a face both pale and animated, seduced the imagination and commanded homage. Venus Polyhymnia stood confessed in all her charms, for the time triumphant over that Venus Urania who made the convent of the Paraclete in after times a blessed comforter to all who sought its consolations.

Among the distinguished visitors at the house of her uncle the canon, attracted by her beauty and accomplishments, was a man thirty-eight years of age, of noble birth, but by profession an ecclesiastic; whose large forehead, fiery eye, proud air, plain, negligent dress, and aristocratic manners, by turns affable and haughty, stamped him as an extraordinary man. The people in

the streets stopped to gaze at him as he passed, or rushed to the doors and windows for a glimpse; for he was as famous for genius and learning as he was distinguished by manners and aspect. He was the eldest son of a Breton nobleman, who had abandoned his inheritance and birthright for the fascinations of literature and philosophy. His name was Peter Abélard, on the whole the most brilliant and interesting man whom the Middle Ages produced, — not so profound as Anselm, or learned as Peter Lombard, or logical as Thomas Aquinas, or acute as Albertus Magnus, but the most eloquent expounder of philosophy of whom I have read. He made the dullest subjects interesting; he clothed the dry bones of metaphysics with flesh and blood; he invested the most abstruse speculations with life and charm; he filled the minds of old men with envy, and of young men with admiration; he thrilled admirers with his wit, sarcasm, and ridicule, — a sort of Galileo, mocking yet amusing, with a superlative contempt of dulness and pretension. He early devoted himself to dialectics, to all the arts of intellectual gladiatorship, to all the sports of logical tournaments which were held in such value by the awakened spirits of the new civilization.

Such was Abélard's precocious ability, even as a youth, that no champion could be found to refute him in the whole of Brittany. He went from castle

to castle, and convent to convent, a philosophical knight-errant, seeking intellectual adventures; more intent, however, on *éclat* and conquest than on the establishment of the dogmas which had ruled the Church since Saint Augustine. He was a born logician, as Bossuet was a born priest, loving to dispute as much as the Bishop of Meaux loved to preach; not a serious man, but a bright man, ready, keen, acute, turning fools into ridicule, and pushing acknowledged doctrines into absurdity; not to bring out the truth as Socrates did, or furnish a sure foundation of knowledge, but to revolutionize and overturn. His spirit was like that of Lucien, — desiring to demolish, without substituting anything for the dogmas he had made ridiculous. Consequently he was mistrusted by the old oracles of the schools, and detested by conservative churchmen who had intellect enough to see the tendency of his speculations. In proportion to the hatred of orthodox ecclesiastics like Anselme of Laon and Saint Bernard, was the admiration of young men and of the infant universities. Nothing embarrassed him. He sought a reason for all things. He appealed to reason rather than authority, yet made the common mistake of the scholastics in supposing that metaphysics could explain everything. He doubtless kindled a spirit of inquiry, while he sapped the foundation of Christianity and undermined faith. He was a nominalist; that is, he denied

the existence of all eternal ideas, such as Plato and the early Fathers advocated. He is said to have even adduced the opinions of Pagan philosophers to prove the mysteries of revelation. He did not deny revelation, nor authority, nor the prevailing doctrines which the Church indorsed and defended; but the tendency of his teachings was to undermine what had previously been received by faith. He exalted reason, therefore, as higher than faith. His spirit was offensive to conservative teachers. Had he lived in our times, he would have belonged to the most progressive schools of thought and inquiry, — probably a rationalist, denying what he could not prove by reason, and scorning all supernaturalism; a philosopher of the school of Hume, or Strauss, or Renan. And yet, after assailing everything venerable, and turning his old teachers into ridicule, and creating a spirit of rationalistic inquiry among the young students of divinity, who adored him, Abélard settled back on authority in his old age, perhaps alarmed and shocked at the mischief he had done in his more brilliant years.

This exceedingly interesting man, with all his vanity, conceit, and arrogance, had turned his steps to Paris, the centre of all intellectual life in France, after he had achieved a great provincial reputation. He was then only twenty, a bright and daring youth, conscious of his powers, and burning with ambition. He was not

ambitious of ecclesiastical preferment, for the great sees and the leading monasteries were ruled by the aristocracy. He was simply ambitious of influence over students in philosophy and religion, — fond of *éclat* and fame as a teacher. The universities were not then established; there were no chairs for professors, nor even were there scholastic titles, like those of doctor and master; but Paris was full of students, disgusted with the provincial schools. The Cathedral School of Paris was the great attraction to these young men, then presided over by William of Champeaux, a very respectable theologian, but not a remarkable genius like Aquinas and Bonaventura, who did not arise until the Dominican and Franciscan orders were established to combat heresy. Abélard, being still a youth, attended the lectures of this old theologian, who was a Realist, not an original thinker, but enjoying a great reputation, which he was most anxious to preserve. The youthful prodigy at first was greatly admired by the veteran teacher; but Abélard soon began to question him and argue with him. Admiration was then succeeded by jealousy. Some sided with the venerable teacher, but more with the flippant yet brilliant youth who turned his master's teachings into ridicule, and aspired to be a teacher himself. But as teaching was under the supervision of the school of Notre Dame, Paris was interdicted to him; he was not allowed to combat the

received doctrines which were taught in the Cathedral School. So he retired to Melun, about thirty miles from Paris, and set up for a teacher and lecturer on philosophy. All the influence of William of Champeaux and his friends was exerted to prevent Abélard from teaching, but in vain. His lecture-room was crowded. The most astonishing success attended his lectures. Not contented with the *éclat* he received, he now meditated the discomfiture of his old master. He removed still nearer to Paris. And so great was his success and fame, that it is said he compelled William to renounce his Realism and also his chair, and accept a distant bishopric. William was conquered by a mere stripling; but that stripling could have overthrown a Goliath of controversy, not with a sling, but with a giant's sword.

Abélard having won a great dialectical victory, which brought as much fame as military laurels on the battle-field, established himself at St. Geneviève, just outside the walls of Paris, where the Pantheon now stands, which is still the centre of the Latin quarter, and the residence of students. He now applied himself to the study of divinity, and attended the lectures of Anselm of Laon. This celebrated ecclesiastic, though not so famous or able as Anselm of Canterbury, was treated by Abélard with the same arrogance and flippancy as he had bestowed on William of Champeaux. "I fre-

quented," said the young mocker, "the old man's school, but soon discovered that all his power was in length of practice. You would have thought he was kindling a fire, when instantly the whole house was filled with smoke, in which not a single spark was visible. He was a tree covered with thick foliage, which to the distant eye had charms, but on near inspection there was no fruit to be found; a fig-tree such as our Lord did curse; an oak such as Lucan compared Pompey to, — *Stat magni nominis umbra.*"

What a comment on the very philosophy which Abélard himself taught! What better description of the speculations of this bold thinker! But original and brilliant as was the genius of Abélard, he no more could have anticipated the new method which Bacon taught than could Thomas Aquinas. All the various schools of the mediæval dialecticians, Realists and Nominalists alike, sought to establish old theories, not to discover new truth. They could not go beyond their assumptions. So far as their assumptions were true, they rendered great service by their inexorable logic in defending them. They did not establish premises; that was not their concern or mission. Assuming that the sun revolved around the earth, all their astronomical speculations were worthless, even as the assumption of the old doctrine of atoms in our times has led scientists to the wildest conclusions. The meta-

physics of the Schoolmen, whether they were sceptical or reverential, simply sharpened the intellectual faculties without advancing knowledge.

Abélard belonged by nature to the sceptical school. He delighted in negations, and in the work of demolition. So far as he demolished or ridiculed error he rendered the same service as Voltaire did: he prepared the way for a more inquiring spirit. He was also more liberal than his opponents. His spirit was progressive, but his method was faulty. Like all those who have sought to undermine the old systems of thought, he was naturally vain and conceited. He supposed he had accomplished more than he really had. He became bold in his speculations, and undertook to explain subjects beyond his grasp. Thus he professed to unfold the meaning of the prophecies of Ezekiel. He was arrogant in his claims to genius. "It is not by long study," said he, "that I have mastered the heights of science, but by the force of my mind." This flippancy, accompanied by wit and eloquence, fascinated young men. His auditors were charmed. "The first philosopher," they said, "had become the first divine." New pupils crowded his lecture-room, and he united lectures on philosophy with lectures on divinity. "Theology and philosophy encircled his brow with a double garland." So popular was he, that students came from Germany and Italy and England to hear his lectures

The number of his pupils, it is said, was more than five thousand; and these included the brightest intellects of the age, among whom one was destined to be a pope (the great Innocent III.), nineteen to be cardinals, and one hundred to be bishops. What a proud position for a young man! What an astonishing success for that age! And his pupils were as generous as they were enthusiastic. They filled his pockets with gold; they hung upon his lips with rapture; they extolled his genius wherever they went; they carried his picture from court to court, from castle to castle, and convent to convent; they begged for a lock of his hair, for a shred of his garment. Never was seen before such idolatry of genius, such unbounded admiration for eloquence; for he stood apart and different from all other lights, — pre-eminent as a teacher of philosophy. "He reigned," says Lamartine, "by eloquence over the spirit of youth, by beauty over the regard of women, by love-songs which penetrated all hearts, by musical melodies repeated by every mouth. Let us imagine in a single man the first orator, the first philosopher, the first poet, the first musician of the age, — Cicero, Plato, Petrarch, Schubert, — all united in one living celebrity, and we can form some idea of his attractions and fame at this period of his life."

Such was that brilliant but unsound man, with learning, fame, personal beauty, fascinating eloquence.

dialectical acumen, aristocratic manners, and transcendent wit, who encountered at thirty-eight the most beautiful, gracious, accomplished, generous, and ardent woman that adorned that time, — only eighteen, thirsting for knowledge, craving for sympathy, and intensely idolatrous of intellectual excellence. But one result could be anticipated from such a meeting: they became passionately enamored of each other. In order to secure a more uninterrupted intercourse, Abélard sought and obtained a residence in the house of Fulbert, under pretence of desiring to superintend the education of his niece. The ambitious, vain, unsuspecting priest was delighted to receive so great a man, whose fame filled the world. He intrusted Héloïse to his care, with permission to use blows if they were necessary to make her diligent and obedient!

And what young woman with such a nature and under such circumstances could resist the influence of such a teacher? I need not dwell on the familiar story, how mutual admiration was followed by mutual friendship, and friendship was succeeded by mutual infatuation, and the gradual abandonment of both to a mad passion, forgetful alike of fame and duty.

"It became tedious," said Abélard, "to go to my lessons. I gave my lectures with negligence. I spoke only from habit and memory. I was only a reciter of ancient inventions; and if I chanced to compose verses,

they were songs of love, not secrets of philosophy." The absence of his mind evinced how powerfully his new passion moved his fiery and impatient soul. "He consumed his time in writing verses to the canon's niece; and even as Hercules in the gay court of Omphale threw down his club in order to hold the distaff, so Abélard laid aside his sceptre as a monarch of the schools to sing sonnets at the feet of Héloïse." And she also, still more unwisely, in the mighty potency of an absorbing love, yielded up her honor and her pride. This mutual infatuation was, it would seem, a gradual transition from the innocent pleasure of delightful companionship to the guilt of unrestrained desire. It was not premeditated design, — not calculation, but insidious dalliance: —

> "Thou know'st how guiltless first I met thy flame,
> When love approached me under friendship's name.
> Guiltless I gazed; heaven listened when you sung,
> And truths divine came mended from your tongue.
> From lips like those, what precept failed to move?
> Too soon they taught me 't was no sin to love."

In a healthy state of society this mutual passion would have been followed by the marriage ties. The parties were equal in culture and social position. And Abélard probably enjoyed a large income from the fees of students, and could well support the expenses of a family. All that was needed was the consecration of

emotions, which are natural and irresistible,—a mystery perhaps but ordained, and without which marriage would be mere calculation and negotiation. Passion, doubtless, is blind; but in this very blindness we see the hand of the Creator,—to baffle selfishness and pride. What would become of our world if men and women were left to choose their partners with the eye of unclouded reason? Expediency would soon make a desert of earth, and there would be no paradise found for those who are unattractive or in adverse circumstances. Friendship might possibly bring people together; but friendship exists only between equals and people of congenial tastes. Love brings together also those who are unequal. It joins the rich to the poor, the strong to the weak, the fortunate to the unfortunate, and thus defeats the calculations which otherwise would enter into matrimonial life. Without the blindness of passionate love the darts of Cupid would be sent in vain; and the helpless and neglected — as so many are — would stand but little chance for that happiness which is associated with the institution of marriage. The world would be filled with old bachelors and old maids, and population would hopelessly decline among virtuous people.

No scandal would have resulted from the ardent loves of Abélard and Héloïse had they been united by that sacred relation which was ordained in the garden

of Eden. "If any woman," says Legouvé, "may stand as the model of a wife in all her glory, it is Héloïse. Passion without bounds and without alloy, enthusiasm for the genius of Abélard, jealous care for his reputation, a vigorous intellect, learning sufficient to join in his labors, and an unsullied name."

But those stern, sophistical ideas which early entered into monastic life, and which permeated the Christianity of the Middle Ages, presented a powerful barrier against the instincts of nature and the ordinances of God. Celibacy was accounted as a supernal virtue, and the marriage of a priest was deemed a lasting disgrace. It obscured his fame, his prospects, his position, and his influence; it consigned him to ridicule and reproach. He was supposed to be married only to the Church, and would be unfaithful to Heaven if he bound himself by connubial ties. Says Saint Jerome, "Take axe in hand and hew up by the roots the sterile tree of marriage. God permits it, I grant; but Christ and Mary consecrated virginity."

When Hildebrand, inspired by his religious zeal, denounced the marriage of priests, he made war on the most sacred instincts of human nature. He may have strengthened the papal domination, but he weakened the restraints of home. Only a dark and beclouded age could have upheld such a policy. Upon the Church of the Middle Ages we lay the blame of

these false ideas. She is in a measure responsible for the conduct of Abélard and Héloïse. They were not greater than the ideas of their age. Had Abélard been as bold in defying the accepted custom of the Church in this respect as he was in fighting the monks of St. Denis or the intellectual intolerance of Bernard, he would at least have held the respect universally accorded by all men to reformers. But he was a slave to interest and conventionality. He could not brave the opinions of society; he dared not lose caste with those who ruled the Church; he would not give up his chances of preferment. He was unwilling either to renounce his love, or to avow it by an honorable, open union.

At last his intimacy created scandal. In the eyes of the schools and of the Church he had sacrificed philosophy and fame to a second Delilah. And Héloïse was even more affected by his humiliation than himself. She more than he was opposed to marriage, knowing that this would doom him to neglect and reproach. Abélard would perhaps have consented to an open marriage had Héloïse been willing; but with a strange perversity she refused. His reputation and interests were dearer to her than was her own fair name. She sacrificed herself to his fame; she blinded herself to the greatest mistake a woman could make. The excess of her love made her insensible to the principles of an immutable morality. Circumstances palliated her

course, but did not excuse it. The fatal consequences of her folly pursued her into the immensity of subsequent grief; and though afterwards she was assured of peace and forgiveness in the depths of her repentance, the demon of infatuated love was not easily exorcised. She may have been unconscious of degradation in the boundless spirit of self-sacrifice which she was willing to make for the object of her devotion, but she lost both dignity and fame. She entreated him who was now quoted as a reproach to human weakness, since the languor of passion had weakened his power and his eloquence, to sacrifice her to his fame; "to permit her no longer to adore him as a divinity who accepts the homage of his worshippers; to love her no longer, if this love diminished his reputation; to reduce her even, if necessary, to the condition of a woman despised by the world, since the glory of his love would more than compensate for the contempt of the universe."

"What reproaches," said she, "should I merit from the Church and the schools of philosophy, were I to draw from them their brightest star! And shall a woman dare to take to herself that man whom Nature meant to be the ornament and benefactor of the human race? Then reflect on the nature of matrimony, with its littleness and cares. How inconsistent it is with the dignity of a wise man! Saint Paul earnestly dissuades from it. So do the saints. So do the

philosophers of ancient times. Think a while. What a ridiculous association, — the philosopher and the chambermaids, writing-desks and cradles, books and distaffs, pens and spindles! Intent on speculation when the truths of nature and revelation are breaking on your eye, will you hear the sudden cry of children, the lullaby of nurses, the turbulent bustling of disorderly servants? In the serious pursuits of wisdom there is no time to be lost. Believe me, as well withdraw totally from literature as attempt to proceed in the midst of worldly avocations. Science admits no participation in the cares of life. Remember the feats of Xanthippe. Take counsel from the example of Socrates, who has been set up as a beacon for all coming time to warn philosophers from the fatal rock of matrimony."

Such was the blended truth, irony, and wit with which Héloïse dissuaded Abélard from open marriage. He compromised the affair, and contented himself with a secret marriage. "After a night spent in prayer," said he, "in one of the churches of Paris, on the following morning we received the nuptial blessing in the presence of the uncle of Héloïse and of a few mutual friends. We then retired without observation, that this union, known only to God and a few intimates, should bring neither shame nor prejudice to my renown." A cold and selfish act, such as we might expect in Louis XIV. and Madame de Maintenon, — yet, nevertheless. the feeble concession which pride and policy

make to virtue, the triumph of expediency over all heroic and manly qualities. Like Maintenon, Héloïse was willing to seem what she was not, — only to be explained on the ground that concubinage was a less evil, in the eyes of the Church, than marriage in a priest.

But even a secret marriage was attended with great embarrassment. The news of it leaks out through the servants. The envious detractors of Abélard rejoice in his weakness and his humiliation. His pride now takes offence, and he denies the ties; and so does Héloïse. The old uncle is enraged and indignant. Abélard, justly fearing his resentment, — yea, being cruelly maltreated at his instigation, — removes his wife to the convent where she was educated, and induces her to take the veil. She obeys him; she obeys him in all things; she has no will but his. She thinks of nothing but his reputation and interest; she forgets herself entirely, yet not without bitter anguish. She accepts the sacrifice, but it costs her infinite pangs. She is separated from her husband forever. Nor was the convent agreeable to her. It was dull, monotonous, dismal; imprisonment in a tomb, a living death, where none could know her agonies but God; where she could not even hear from him who was her life.

Yet immolation in the dreary convent, where for nearly forty years she combated the recollection of her

folly, was perhaps the best thing for her. It was a cruel necessity. In the convent she was at least safe from molestation; she had every opportunity for study and meditation; she was free from the temptations of the world, and removed from its scandals and reproach. The world was crucified to her; Christ was now her spouse.

To a convent also Abélard retired, overwhelmed with shame and penitence. At St. Denis he assumed the strictest habits, mortified his body with severe austerities, and renewed with ardor his studies in philosophy and theology. He was not without mental sufferings, but he could bury his grief in his ambition. It would seem that a marked change now took place in the character of Abélard. He was less vain and conceited, and sought more eagerly the consolations of religion. His life became too austere for his brother monks, and they compelled him to leave this aristocratic abbey. He then resumed his lectures in the wilderness. He retreated to a desert place in Champagne, where he constructed a small oratory with his own hands. But still students gathered around him. They, too, constructed cells, like ancient anchorites, and cultivated the fields for bread. Then, as their numbers increased, they erected a vast edifice of stone and timber, which Abélard dedicated to the Holy Comforter, and called the Paraclete. It was here that his best days were

spent. His renewed labors and his intellectual boldness increased the admiration of his pupils. It became almost idolatry. It is said that three thousand students assembled at the Paraclete to hear him lecture. What admiration for genius, when three thousand young men could give up the delights of Paris for a wilderness with Abélard! What marvellous power of fascination he must have had!

This renewed success, in the midst of disgrace, created immeasurable envy. Moreover, the sarcasms, boldness, and new views of the philosopher raised a storm of hatred. Galileo was not more offensive to the pedants and priests of his generation than Abélard was to the Schoolmen and monks of his day. They impeached both his piety and theology. He was stigmatized as unsound and superficial. Yet he continued his attacks, his ridicule, and his sarcasms. In proportion to the animosities of his foes was the zeal of his followers, who admired his boldness and arrogance. At last a great clamor was raised against the daring theologian. Saint Bernard, the most influential and profound ecclesiastic of the day, headed the opposition. He maintained that the foundations of Christianity were assailed. Even Abélard could not stand before the indignation and hostility of such a saint,—a man who kindled crusades, who made popes, who controlled the opinions of the age. Abélard was obliged to fly, and

sought an asylum amid the rocks and sands of Brittany. The Duke of this wild province gave him the abbey of St. Gildas; but its inmates were ignorant and disorderly, and added insubordination to dissoluteness. They ornamented their convent with the trophies of the chase. They thought more of bears and wild boars and stags than they did of hymns and meditations. The new abbot, now a grave and religious man, in spite of his opposition to the leaders of the orthodox party, endeavored to reform the monks, — a hopeless task, — and they turned against him with more ferocity than the theologians. They even poisoned, it is said, the sacramental wine. He was obliged to hide among the rocks to save his life. Nothing but aid from the neighboring barons saved him from assassination.

Thus fifteen years were passed in alternate study, glory, suffering, and shame. In his misery Abélard called on God for help, — his first great advance in that piety which detractors depreciated. He wrote also to a friend a history of his misfortunes. By accident this history fell into the hands of Héloïse, then abbess of the Paraclete, which Abélard had given her, and where she was greatly revered for all those virtues most esteemed in her age. It opened her wound afresh, and she wrote a letter to her husband such as has seldom been equalled for pathos and depth of sentiment. It is an immortal record of her grief, her unsubdued passion,

her boundless love, not without gentle reproaches for what seemed a cold neglect and silence for fifteen long and bitter years, yet breathing forgiveness, admiration, affection. The salutation of that letter is remarkable: "Héloïse to her lord, to her father, to her husband, to her brother: his servant, — yes, his daughter; his wife, — yes, his sister." Thus does she begin that tender and long letter, in which she describes her sufferings, her unchanged affections, her ardent wishes for his welfare, revealing in every line not merely genius and sensibility, but a lofty and magnanimous soul. She glories in what constitutes the real superiority of her old lover; she describes with simplicity what had originally charmed her, — his songs and conversation. She professes still an unbounded obedience to his will, and begs for a reply, if for nothing else that she may be stimulated to a higher life amid the asperities of her gloomy convent.

> "Yet write, oh, write all, that I may join
> Grief to thy griefs, and echo sighs to thine!
> Years still are mine, and these I need not spare,
> Love but demands what else were shed in prayer;
> No happier task these faded eyes pursue, —
> To read and weep is all I now can do."

Abélard replies to this touching letter coldly, but religiously, calling her his "sister in Christ," but not attempting to draw out the earthly love which both

had sought to crush. He implores her prayers in his behalf. The only sign of his former love is a request to be buried in her abbey, in anticipation of a speedy and violent death. Most critics condemn this letter as heartless; yet it is but charitable to suppose that he did not wish to trifle with a love so great, and reopen a wound so deep and sacred. All his efforts now seem to have been directed to raise her soul to heaven. But his letter does not satisfy her, and she again gives vent to her passionate grief in view of the separation: —

"O inclement Clemency! O unfortunate Fortune! She has so far consumed her weakness upon me that she has nothing left for others against whom she rages. I am the most miserable of the miserable, the most unhappy of the unhappy!"

This letter seems to have touched Abélard, and he replied to it more at length, and with great sympathy, giving her encouragement and consolation. He speaks of their mutual sufferings as providential; and his letter is couched in a more Christian spirit than one would naturally impute to him in view of his contests with the orthodox leaders of the Church; and it also expresses more tenderness than can be reconciled with the selfish man he is usually represented. He writes: —

"See, dearest, how with the strong nets of his mercy God has taken us from the depths of a perilous sea. Observe how

he has tempered mercy with justice; compare our danger with the deliverance, our disease with the remedy. I merit death, and God gives me life. Come, and join me in proclaiming how much the Lord has done for us. Be my inseparable companion in an act of grace, since you have participated with me in the fault and the pardon. Take courage, my dear sister; whom the Lord loveth he chastiseth. Sympathize with Him who suffered for your redemption. Approach in spirit His sepulchre. Be thou His spouse."

Then he closes with this prayer:—

"When it pleased Thee, O Lord, and as it pleased Thee, Thou didst join us, and Thou didst separate us. Now, what Thou hast so mercifully begun, mercifully complete; and after separating us in this world, join us together eternally in heaven."

No one can read this letter without acknowledging its delicacy and its loftiness. All his desires centred in the spiritual good of her whom the Church would not allow him to call any longer his wife, yet to whom he hoped to be reunited in heaven. As a professed nun she could no longer, with propriety, think of him as an earthly husband. For a priest to acknowledge a nun for his wife would have been a great scandal. By all the laws of the Church and the age they were now only brother and sister in Christ. Nothing escaped

from his pen which derogates from the austere dignity of the priest.

But Héloïse was more human and less conventional. She had not conquered her love; once given, it could not be taken back. She accepted her dreary immolation in the convent, since she obeyed Abélard both as husband and as a spiritual father; but she would have left the convent and rejoined him had he demanded it, for marriage was to her more sacred than the veil. She was more emancipated from the religious beliefs of her time than even the bold and rationalistic philosopher. With all her moral and spiritual elevation, Héloïse could not conquer her love. And, as a wedded wife, why should she conquer it? She was both nun and wife. If fault there was, it was as wife, in immuring herself in a convent and denying the marriage. It should have been openly avowed; the denial of it placed her in a false position, as a fallen woman. Yet, as a fallen woman, she regained her position in the eyes of the world. She was a lady abbess. It was impossible for a woman to enjoy a higher position than the control of a convent. As abbess, she enjoyed the friendship and respect of some of the saintliest and greatest characters of the age, even of such a man as Peter the Venerable, abbot of Cluny. And it is impossible that she should have won the friendship of such a man, if she herself had not been irreproachable

in her own character. The error in judging Héloïse is, that she, as nun, had no right to love. But the love existed long before she took the veil, and was consecrated by marriage, even though private. By the mediæval and conventional stand point, it is true, the wife was lost in the nun. That is the view that Abélard took, — that it was a sin to live with Héloïse any longer. But Héloïse felt that it was no sin to love him who was her life. She continued to live in him who ruled over her, and to whose desire her will was subject and obedient, according to that eternal law declared in the garden of Eden.

Nor could this have been otherwise so long as Abélard retained the admiration of Héloïse, and was worthy of her devotion. We cannot tell what changes may have taken place in her soul had he been grovelling, or tyrannical, a slave of degrading habits, or had he treated her with cruel harshness, or ceased to sympathize with her sorrows, or transferred his affections to another object. But whatever love he had to give, he gave to her to the end, so far as the ideas of his age would permit. His fault was in making a nun of his wife, which was in the eyes of the world a virtual repudiation; even though, from a principle of sublime obedience and self-sacrifice, she consented to the separation. Was Josephine to blame because she loved a selfish man after she was repudiated? Héloïse was

simply unable to conquer a powerful love. It was not converted into hatred, because Abélard, in her eyes, seemed still to be worthy of it. She regarded him as a saint, forced by the ideas of his age to crush a mortal love, — which she herself could not do, because it was a sentiment, and sentiment is eternal. She was greater than Abélard, because her love was more permanent; in other words, because her soul was greater. In intellect he may have been superior to her, but not in the higher qualities which imply generosity, self-abnegation, and sympathy, — qualities which are usually stronger in women than in men. In Abélard the lower faculties — ambition, desire of knowledge, vanity — consumed the greater. *He* could be contented with the gratification of these, even as men of a still lower type can renounce intellectual pleasures for the sensual. It does not follow that Héloïse was weaker than he because she could not live outside the world of sentiment, but rather loftier and nobler. These higher faculties constituted her superiority to Abélard. It was sentiment which made her so pre-eminently great, and it was this which really endeared her to Abélard. By reason and will he ruled over her; but by the force of superior sentiment she ruled over him.

Sentiment, indeed, underlies everything that is great or lovely or enduring on this earth. It is the joy of festivals, the animating soul of patriotism, the bond

of families, the beauty of religious, political, and social institutions. It has consecrated Thermopylæ, the Parthenon, the Capitol, the laurel crown, the conqueror's triumphal procession, the epics of Homer, the eloquence of Demosthenes, the muse of Virgil, the mediæval cathedral, the town-halls of Flanders, the colleges of Oxford and Cambridge, the struggles of the Puritans, the deeds of Gustavus Adolphus, the Marseilles hymn, the farewell address of Washington. There is no poetry without it, nor heroism, nor social banqueting. What is Christmas without the sentiments which hallow the evergreen, the anthem, the mistletoe, the family reunion? What is even tangible roast-beef and plum-pudding without a party to enjoy them; and what is the life of the party but the interchange of sentiments? Why is a cold sleigh-ride, or the ascent of a mountain, or a voyage across the Atlantic, or a rough journey under torrid suns to the consecrated places, — why are these endurable, and even pleasant? It is because the sentiments which prompt them are full of sweet and noble inspiration. The Last Supper, and Bethany, and the Sepulchre are immortal, because they testify eternal love. Leonidas lives in the heart of the world because he sacrificed himself to patriotism. The martyrs are objects of unfading veneration, because they died for Christianity.

In the same way Héloïse is embalmed in the affec-

tions of all nations because she gave up everything for an exalted sentiment which so possessed her soul that neither scorn, nor pity, nor ascetic severities, nor gloomy isolation, nor ingratitude, nor a living death could eradicate or weaken it, — an unbounded charity which covered with its veil the evils she could not remove. That all-pervading and all-conquering sentiment was the admiration of ideal virtues and beauties which her rapt and excited soul saw in her adored lover; such as Dante saw in his departed Beatrice. It was unbounded admiration for Abélard which first called out the love of Héloïse; and his undoubted brilliancy and greatness were exaggerated in her loving eyes by her imagination, even as mothers see in children traits that are hidden from all other mortal eyes. So lofty and godlike did he seem, amidst the plaudits of the schools, and his triumph over all the dignitaries that sought to humble him; so interesting was he to her by his wit, sarcasm, and eloquence, — that she worshipped him, and deemed it the most exalted honor to possess exclusively his love in return, which he gave certainly to no one else. Satisfied that he, the greatest man of the world, — as he seemed and as she was told he was, — should give to her what she gave to him, she exulted in it as her highest glory. It was all in all to her; but not to him. See, then, how superior Héloïse was to Abélard in humility as well as self-abnegation

She was his equal, and yet she ever gloried in his superiority. See how much greater, too, she was in lofty sentiments, since it was the majesty of his mind and soul which she adored. He was comparatively indifferent to her when she became no longer an object of desire; but not so with her, since she was attracted by his real or supposed greatness of intellect, which gave permanence to her love, and loftiness also. He was her idol, since he possessed those qualities which most powerfully excited her admiration.

This then is love, when judged by a lofty standard, — worship of what is most glorious in mind and soul. And this exalted love is most common among the female sex, since their passions are weaker and their sentiments are stronger than those of most men. What a fool a man is to weaken this sympathy, or destroy this homage, or outrage this indulgence; or withhold that tenderness, that delicate attention, that toleration of foibles, that sweet appreciation, by which the soul of woman is kept alive and the lamp of her incense burning! And woe be to him who drives this confiding idolater back upon her technical obligations! The form that holds these certitudes of the soul may lose all its beauty by rudeness or neglect. And even if the form remains, what is a mortal body without the immortal soul which animates it? The glory of a man or of a woman is the real presence of spiritual love.

which brings peace to homes, alleviation to burdens consolation to sufferings, rest to labors, hope to anxieties, and a sublime repose amid the changes of the world, — that blessed flower of perennial sweetness and beauty which Adam in his despair bore away from Eden, and which alone almost compensated him for the loss of Paradise.

It is not my object to present Abélard except in his connection with the immortal love with which he inspired the greatest woman of the age. And yet I cannot conclude this sketch without taking a parting glance of this brilliant but unfortunate man. And I confess that his closing days strongly touch my sympathies, and make me feel that historians have been too harsh in their verdicts. Historians have based their opinions on the hostilities which theological controversies produced, and on the neglect which Abélard seemed to show for the noble woman who obeyed and adored him. But he appears to have employed his leisure and tranquil days in writing hymns to the abbess of the Paraclete, in preparing homilies, and in giving her such advice as her circumstances required. All his later letters show the utmost tenderness and zeal for the spiritual good of the woman to whom he hoped to be reunited in heaven, and doing for Héloïse what Jerome did for Paula, and Fénelon for Madame Guyon.

If no longer her lover, he was at least her friend. And, moreover, at this time he evinced a loftier religious life than he has the credit of possessing. He lived a life of study and meditation.

But his enemies would not allow him to rest, even in generous labors. They wished to punish him and destroy his influence. So they summoned him to an ecclesiastical council to answer for his heresies. At first he resolved to defend himself, and Bernard, his greatest enemy, even professed a reluctance to contend with his superior in dialectical contests. But Abélard, seeing how inflamed were the passions of the theologians against him, and how vain would be his defence, appealed at once to the Pope; and Rome, of course, sided with his enemies. He was condemned to perpetual silence, and his books were ordered to be burned.

To this sentence it would appear that Abélard prepared to submit with more humility than was to be expected from so bold and arrogant a man. But he knew he could not resist an authority based on generally accepted ideas any easier than Henry IV. could have resisted Hildebrand. He made up his mind to obey the supreme authority of the Church, but bitterly felt the humiliation and the wrong.

Broken in spirit and in reputation, Abélard, now an old man, set out on foot for Rome to plead his cause

before the Pope. He stopped on his way at Cluny in Burgundy, that famous monastery where Hildebrand himself had ruled, now, however, presided over by Peter the Venerable, — the most benignant and charitable ecclesiastical dignitary of that age. And as Abélard approached the gates of the venerable abbey, which was the pride of the age, worn out with fatigue and misfortune, he threw himself at the feet of the lordly abbot and invoked shelter and protection. How touching is the pride of greatness, when brought low by penitence or grief, like that of Theodosius at the feet of Ambrose, or Henry II. at the tomb of Becket! But Peter raises him up, receives him in his arms, opens to him his heart and the hospitalities of his convent, not as a repentant prodigal, but as a great genius brought low by the persecution of his enemies. Peter did all in his power to console his visitor, and even privately interceded with the Pope, remembering only Abélard's greatness and his misfortunes. And the persecuted philosopher, through the kind offices of the abbot, was left in peace, and was even reconciled with Bernard, — an impossibility without altered opinions in Abélard, or a submission to the Church which bore all the marks of piety.

The few remaining days of this extraordinary man, it seems, were spent in study, penitence, and holy meditation. So beloved and revered was he by the

community among whom he dwelt, that for six centuries his name was handed down from father to son among the people of the valley and town of Cluny. "At the extremity of a retired valley," says Lamartine, "flanked by the walls of the convent, on the margin of extensive meadows, closed by woods, and near to a neighboring stream, there exists an enormous lime-tree, under the shade of which Abélard in his closing days was accustomed to sit and meditate, with his face turned towards the Paraclete which he had built, and where Héloïse still discharged the duties of abbess."

But even this pensive pleasure was not long permitted him. He was worn out with sorrows and misfortunes; and in a few months after he had crossed the hospitable threshold of Cluny he died in the arms of his admiring friend. "Under the instinct of a sentiment as sacred as religion itself, Peter felt that Abélard above and Héloïse on earth demanded of him the last consolation of a reunion in the grave. So, quietly, in the dead of night, dreading scandal, yet true to his impulses, without a hand to assist or an eye to witness, he exhumed the coffin which had been buried in the abbey cemetery, and conveyed it himself to the Paraclete, and intrusted it to Héloïse."

She received it with tears, shut herself up in the cold vault with the mortal remains of him she had loved so

well; while Peter, that aged saint of consolation, pronounced the burial service with mingled tears and sobs. And after having performed this last sad office, and given his affectionate benediction to the great woman to whom he was drawn by ties of admiration and sympathy, this venerable dignitary wended his way silently back to Cluny, and, for the greater consolation of Héloïse, penned the following remarkable letter, which may perhaps modify our judgment of Abélard: —

"It is no easy task, my sister, to describe in a few lines the holiness, the humility, and the self-denial which our departed brother exhibited to us, and of which our whole collected brotherhood alike bear witness. Never have I beheld a life and deportment so thoroughly submissive. I placed him in an elevated rank in the community, but he appeared the lowest of all by the simplicity of his dress and his abstinence from all the enjoyments of the senses. I speak not of luxury, for that was a stranger to him; he refused everything but what was indispensable for the sustenance of life. He read continually, prayed often, and never spoke except when literary conversation or holy discussion compelled him to break silence. His mind and tongue seemed concentrated on philosophical and divine instructions. Simple, straightforward, reflecting on eternal judgments, shunning all evil, he consecrated the closing hours of an illustrious life. And when a mortal sickness seized him, with what fervent piety, what ardent inspiration did he make his last confession

of his sins; with what fervor did he receive the promise of eternal life; with what confidence did he recommend his body and soul to the tender mercies of the Saviour!"

Such was the death of Abélard, as attested by the most venerated man of that generation. And when we bear in mind the friendship and respect of such a man as Peter, and the exalted love of such a woman as Héloïse, it is surely not strange that posterity, and the French nation especially, should embalm his memory in their traditions.

Héloïse survived him twenty years, — a priestess of God, a mourner at the tomb of Abélard. And when in the solitude of the Paraclete she felt the approach of the death she had so long invoked, she directed the sisterhood to place her body beside that of her husband in the same leaden coffin. And there, in the silent aisles of that abbey-church, it remained for five hundred years, until it was removed by Lucien Bonaparte to the Museum of French Monuments in Paris, but again transferred, a few years after, to the cemetery of Père la Chaise. The enthusiasm of the French erected over the remains a beautiful monument; and "there still may be seen, day by day, the statues of the immortal lovers, decked with flowers and coronets, perpetually renewed with invisible hands, — the silent tribute of the heart of that consecrated sentiment which survives

all change. Thus do those votive offerings mysteriously convey admiration for the constancy and sympathy with the posthumous union of two hearts who transposed conjugal tenderness from the senses to the soul, who spiritualized the most ardent of human passions, and changed love itself into a holocaust, a martyrdom, and a holy sacrifice."

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JOAN OF ARC

A. D. 1412–1431.

HEROIC WOMEN.

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PERHAPS the best known and most popular of heroines is Joan of Arc, called the Maid of Orleans. Certainly she is one of the most interesting characters in the history of France during the Middle Ages; hence I select her to illustrate heroic women. There are not many such who are known to fame; though heroic qualities are not uncommon in the gentler sex, and a certain degree of heroism enters into the character of all those noble and strongly marked women who have attracted attention and who have rendered great services. It marked many of the illustrious women of the Bible, of Grecian and Roman antiquity, and especially those whom chivalry produced in mediæval Europe; and even in our modern times intrepidity and courage have made many a woman famous, like Florence Nightingale. In Jewish history we point to Deborah, who delivered Israel from the hands of Jabin; and to Jael, who slew Sisera, the captain of Jabin's

hosts; and to Judith, who cut off the head of Holofernes. It was heroism, which is ever allied with magnanimity, that prompted the daughter of Jephtha to the most remarkable self-sacrifice recorded in history. There was a lofty heroism in Abigail, when she prevented David from shedding innocent blood. And among the Pagan nations, who does not admire the heroism of such women as we have already noticed? Chivalry, too, produced illustrious heroines in every country of Europe. We read of a Countess of March, in the reign of Edward III., who defended Dunbar with uncommon courage against Montague and an English army; a Countess of Montfort shut herself up in the fortress of Hennebon, and successfully defied the whole power of Charles of Blois; Jane Hatchett repulsed in person a considerable body of Burgundian troops; Altrude, Countess of Bertinora, advanced with an army to the relief of Ancona; Bona Lombardi, with a body of troops, liberated her husband from captivity; Isabella of Lorraine raised an army for the rescue of her husband; Queen Philippa, during the absence of her husband in Scotland, stationed herself in the Castle of Bamborough and defied the threats of Douglas, and afterwards headed an army against David, King of Scotland, and took him prisoner, and shut him up in the Tower of London.

But these illustrious women of the Middle Ages who

performed such feats of gallantry and courage belonged to the noble class; they were identified with aristocratic institutions; they lived in castles; they were the wives and daughters of feudal princes and nobles whose business was war, and who were rough and turbulent warriors, and sometimes no better than robbers, but who had the virtues of chivalry, which was at its height during the wars of Edward III. And yet neither the proud feudal nobles nor their courageous wives and daughters took any notice of the plebeian people, except to oppress and grind them down. No virtues were developed by feudalism among the people but submission, patience, and loyalty.

And thus it is extraordinary that such a person should appear in that chivalric age as Joan of Arc, who rose from the humblest class, who could neither read nor write, — a peasant girl without friends or influence, living among the Vosges mountains on the borders of Champagne and Lorraine. She was born in 1412, in the little obscure village of Domremy on the Meuse, on land belonging to the French crown. She lived in a fair and fertile valley on the line of the river, on the other side of which were the Burgundian territories. The Lorraine of the Vosges was a mountainous district covered with forests, which served for royal hunting parties. The village of Domremy itself was once a dependency of the abbey of St. Remy at Rheims.

This district had suffered cruelly from the wars between the Burgundians and the adherents of the Armagnacs, one of the great feudal families of France in the Middle Ages.

Joan, or Jeanne, was the third daughter of one of the peasant laborers of Domremy. She was employed by her mother in spinning and sewing, while her sisters and brothers were set to watch cattle. Her mother could teach her neither to read nor write, but early imbued her mind with the sense of duty. Joan was naturally devout, and faultless in her morals; simple, natural, gentle, fond of attending the village church; devoting herself, when not wanted at home, to nursing the sick, — the best girl in the village; strong, healthy, and beautiful; a spirit lowly but poetic, superstitious but humane, and fond of romantic adventures. But her piety was one of her most marked peculiarities, and somehow or other she knew more than we can explain of Scripture heroes and heroines.

One of the legends of that age and place was that the marshes of Lorraine were to give birth to a maid who was to save the realm, — founded on an old prophecy of Merlin. It seems that when only thirteen years old Joan saw visions, and heard celestial voices bidding her to be good and to trust in God; and as virginity was considered to be a supernal virtue, she vowed to remain a virgin, but told no one of her vow

or her visions. She seems to have been a girl of extraordinary good sense, which was as marked as her religious enthusiasm.

The most remarkable thing about this young peasant girl is that she claimed to have had visions and heard voices which are difficult to be distinguished from supernatural, — something like the dæmon of Socrates. She affirmed that Saint Michael the Archangel appeared to her in glory, also Saint Catherine and Saint Margaret, encouraging her in virtue, and indicating to her that a great mission was before her, — that she was to deliver her king and country. Such claims have not been treated with incredulity or contempt by French historians, especially Barante and Michelet, in view of the wonderful work she was instrumental in accomplishing.

At this period France was afflicted with that cruel war which had at intervals been carried on for nearly a century between the English and French kings, and which had arisen from the claims of Edward I. to the throne of France. The whole country was distracted, forlorn, and miserable; it was impoverished, overrun, and drained of fighting men. The war had exhausted the resources of England as well as those of France. The population of England at the close of this long series of wars was less than it was under Henry II. Those wars were more disastrous to the interests of both

the rival kingdoms than even those of the Crusades, and they were marked by great changes and great calamities. The victories of Crécy, Poictiers, and Agincourt — which shed such lustre on the English nation — were followed by reverses, miseries, and defeats, which more than balanced the glories of Edward the Black Prince and Henry V. Provinces were gained and lost, yet no decisive results followed either victory or defeat. The French kings, driven hither and thither, with a decimated people, and with the loss of some of their finest provinces, still retained their sovereignty.

At one time, about the year 1347, Edward III. had seemed to have attained the supreme object of his ambition. France lay bleeding at his feet; he had won the greatest victory of his age; Normandy already belonged to him, Guienne was recovered, Aquitaine was ceded to him, Flanders was on his side, and the possession of Brittany seemed to open his way to Paris. But in fourteen years these conquests were lost; the plague scourged England, and popular discontents added to the perplexities of the once fortunate monarch. Moreover, the House of Commons had come to be a power and a check on royal ambition. The death of the Black Prince consummated his grief and distraction, and the heroic king gave himself up in his old age to a disgraceful profligacy, and died in the arms of Alice Pierce, in the year 1377.

Fifty years pass by, and Henry V. is king of England, and renews his claim to the French throne. The battle of Agincourt (1415) gives to Henry V. the same *éclat* that the victory of Crécy had bestowed on Edward III. Again the French realm is devastated by triumphant Englishmen. The King of France is a captive; his Queen is devoted to the cause of Henry, the Duke of Burgundy is his ally, and he only needs the formal recognition of the Estates to take possession of the French throne. But in the year 1422, in the midst of his successes, he died of a disease which baffled the skill of all his physicians, leaving his kingdom to a child only nine years old, and the prosecution of the French war to his brother the Duke of Bedford, who was scarcely inferior to himself in military genius.

At this time, when Charles VI. of France was insane, and his oldest son Louis dead, his second son Charles declared himself King of France, as Charles VII. But only southern France acknowledged Charles, who at this time was a boy of fifteen years. All the northern provinces, even Guienne and Gascony, acknowledged Henry VI., the infant son of Henry V. of England. Charles's affairs, therefore, were in a bad way, and there was every prospect of the complete conquest of France. Even Paris was the prey alternately of the Burgundians and the Armagnacs, the last of whom were the adherents of Charles the Dauphin,

— the legitimate heir to the throne. He held his little court at Bourges, where he lived as gaily as he could, sometimes in want of the necessaries of life. His troops were chiefly Gascons, Lombards, and Scotch, who got no pay, and who lived by pillage. He was so hard pressed by the Duke of Bedford that he meditated a retreat into Dauphiné. It would seem that he was given to pleasures, and was unworthy of his kingdom, which he nearly lost by negligence and folly.

The Duke of Bedford, in order to drive Charles out of the central provinces, resolved to take Orleans, which was the key to the south, — a city on the north bank of the Loire, strongly fortified and well provisioned. This was in 1428. The probabilities were that this city would fall, for it was already besieged, and was beginning to suffer famine.

In this critical period for France, Joan of Arc appeared on the stage, being then a girl of sixteen (some say eighteen) years of age. Although Joan, as we have said, was uneducated, she yet clearly comprehended the critical condition of her country, and with the same confidence that David had in himself and in his God when he armed himself with a sling and a few pebbles to confront the full-armed giant of the Philistines, inspired by her heavenly visions she resolved to deliver France. She knew nothing of war; she had not been accustomed to equestrian exercises, like a

woman of chivalry; she had no friends; she had never seen great people; she was poor and unimportant. To the eye of worldly wisdom her resolution was perfectly absurd.

It was with the greatest difficulty that Joan finally obtained an interview with Boudricourt, the governor of Vaucouleurs; and he laughed at her, and bade her uncle take her home and chastise her for her presumption. She returned to her humble home, but with resolutions unabated. The voices encouraged her, and the common people believed in her. Again, in the red coarse dress of a peasant girl, she sought the governor, claiming that God had sent her. There was something so strange, so persistent, so honest about her that he reported her case to the King. Meanwhile, the Duke of Lorraine heard of her, and sent her a safe-conduct, and the people of Vaucouleurs came forward and helped her. They gave her a horse and the dress of a soldier; and the governor, yielding to her urgency, furnished her with a sword and a letter to the King. She left without seeing her parents, — which was one of the subsequent charges against her, — and prosecuted her journey amid great perils and fatigues, travelling by night with her four armed attendants.

After twelve days Joan reached Chinon, where the King was tarrying. But here new difficulties arose: she could not get an interview with the King; it was

opposed by his most influential ministers and courtiers. "Why waste precious time," said they, "when Orleans is in the utmost peril, to give attention to a mad peasant-girl, who, if not mad, must be possessed with a devil: a sorceress to be avoided; what can she do for France?" The Archbishop of Rheims, the prime-minister of Charles, especially was against her. The learned doctors of the schools derided her claims. It would seem that her greatest enemies were in the high places of authority. "Not many wise, not many mighty are called." The deliverers of nations in great exigencies rarely have the favor of the great. But the women of the court spoke warmly in Joan's favor, for her conduct was modest and irreproachable; and after two days she was admitted to the royal castle, the Count of Vendôme leading her to the royal presence. Charles stood among a crowd of nobles, all richly dressed; but in her visions this pure enthusiast had seen more glories than an earthly court, and she was undismayed. To the King she repeated the words which had thus far acted liked a charm: "I am Joan the Maid, sent by God to save France;" and she demanded troops. But the King was cautious; he sent two monks to her native village to inquire all about her, while nobles and ecclesiastics cross-questioned her. She was, however, treated courteously, and given in charge to the King's lieutenant, whose wife was

a woman of virtue and piety. Many distinguished people visited her in the castle to which she was assigned, on whom she made a good impression by her modesty, good sense, and sublime enthusiasm. It was long debated in the royal council whether she should be received or rejected; but as affairs were in an exceedingly critical condition, and Orleans was on the point of surrender, it was concluded to listen to her voice.

It must be borne in mind that the age was exceedingly superstitious, and the statesmen of the distracted and apparently ruined country probably decided to make use of this girl, not from any cordial belief in her mission, but from her influence on the people. She might stimulate them to renewed efforts. She was an obscure and ignorant peasant-girl, it was true, but God might have chosen her as an instrument. In this way very humble people, with great claims, have often got the ear and the approval of the wise and powerful, as instruments of Almighty Providence. When Moody and Sankey first preached in London, it was the Lord Chancellor and Lord Chief-Justice — who happened to be religious men — that, amid the cynicism of ordinary men of rank, gave them the most encouragement, and frequently attended their meetings.

And the voices which inspired the Maid of Orleans herself, — what were these? Who can tell? Who

can explain such mysteries? I would not assert, nor would I deny, that they were the voices of inspiration. What is inspiration? It has often been communicated to men. Who can deny that the dæmon of Socrates was something more than a fancied voice? When did supernatural voices first begin to utter the power of God? When will the voices of inspiration cease to be heard on earth? In view of the fact that *she did* accomplish her mission, the voices which inspired this illiterate peasant to deliver France are not to be derided. Who can sit in judgment on the ways in which Providence is seen to act? May He not choose such instruments as He pleases? Are not all His ways mysterious, never to be explained by the reason of man? Did not the occasion seem to warrant something extraordinary? Here was a great country apparently on the verge of ruin. To the eye of reason and experience it seemed that France was to be henceforth ruled, as a subjugated country, by a foreign power. Royal armies had failed to deliver her. Loyalty had failed to arouse the people. Feudal envies and enmities had converted vassals into foes. The Duke of Burgundy, the most powerful vassal of France, was in arms against his liege lord. The whole land was rent with divisions and treasons. And the legitimate king, who ought to have been a power, was himself feeble, frivolous, and pleasure-seeking amid all his perils. *He* could not save the

country. Who could save it? There were no great generals. Universal despair hung over the land. The people were depressed. Military resources were insufficient. If France was to be preserved as an independent and powerful monarchy, something extraordinary must happen to save it. The hope in feudal armies had fled. In fact, only God could rescue the country in such perils and under such forlorn circumstances.

Joan of Arc believed in God, — that He could do what He pleased, that He was a power to be supplicated; and she prayed to Him to save France, since princes could not save the land, divided by their rivalries and jealousies and ambitions. And the conviction, after much prayer and fasting, was impressed upon her mind — no matter how, but it *was* impressed upon her — that God had chosen *her* as His instrument, that it was her mission to raise the siege of Orleans, and cause the young Dauphin to be crowned king at Rheims. This conviction gave her courage and faith and intrepidity. How could she, unacquainted with wars and sieges, show the necessary military skill and genius? She did not pretend to it. She claimed no other wisdom than that which was communicated to her by celestial voices. If she could direct a military movement in opposition to leaders of experience, it was only because this movement was what was indicated

by an archangel. And so decided and imperative was she, that royal orders were given to obey her. One thing was probable, whether a supernatural wisdom and power were given her or not, — she yet might animate the courage of others, she might stimulate them to heroic action, and revive their hopes; for if God was with them, who could be against them? What she had to do was simply this, — to persuade princes and nobles that the Lord would deliver the nation. Let the conviction be planted in the minds of a religious people that God is with them, and in some way will come to their aid if they themselves will put forth their own energies, and they will be almost sure to rally. And here was an inspired woman, as they supposed, ready to lead them on to victory, not by her military skill, but by indicating to them the way as an interpreter of the Divine will. This was not more extraordinary than the repeated deliverances of the Hebrew nation under religious leaders.

The signal deliverance of the French at that gloomy period from the hands of the English, by Joan of Arc, was a religious movement. The Maid is to be viewed as a religious phenomenon; she rested her whole power and mission on the supposition that she was inspired to point out the way of deliverance. She claimed nothing for herself, was utterly without vanity, ambition, or pride, and had no worldly ends to gain. Her

character was without a flaw. She was as near perfection as any mortal ever was: religious, fervent, unselfish, gentle, modest, chaste, patriotic, bent on one thing only, — to be of service to her country, without reward; and to be of service only by way of encouragement, and pointing out what seemed to her to be the direction of God.

So Joan fearlessly stood before kings and nobles and generals, yet in the modest gentleness of conscious virtue, to direct them what to do, as a sort of messenger of Heaven. What was rank or learning to her? If she was sent by a voice that spoke to her soul, and that voice was from God, what was human greatness to her? It paled before the greatness which commissioned her. In the discharge of her mission all men were alike in her eyes; the distinctions of rank faded away in the mighty issues which she wished to bring about, even the rescue of France from foreign enemies, and which she fully believed she could effect with God's aid, and in the way that He should indicate.

Whether the ruling powers fully believed in her or not, they at last complied with her wishes and prayers, though not until she had been subjected to many insults from learned priests and powerful nobles, whom she finally won by her modest and wise replies. Said one of them mockingly: "If it be God's will that the English shall quit France, there is no need for men-at-

arms." To whom she replied: "The men-at-arms must fight, and God shall give the victory." She saw no other deliverance than through fighting, and fighting bravely and heroically, as the means of success. She was commissioned, she said, to stimulate the men to fight, — not to pray, but to fight. She promised no rescue by supernatural means, but only through natural forces. France was not to despond, but to take courage, and fight. There was no imposture about her, only zeal and good sense, to impress upon the country the necessity of bravery and renewed exertions.

The Maid set out for the deliverance of the besieged city in a man's attire, deeming it more modest under her circumstances, and exposing her to fewer annoyances. She was arrayed in a suit of beautiful armor, with a banner after her own device, — white, embroidered with lilies, — and a sword which had been long buried behind the altar of a church. Under her inspiring influence an army of six thousand men was soon collected, commanded by the ablest and most faithful generals who remained to the King, and accompanied by the Archbishop of Rheims, who, though he had no great faith in her claims, yet saw in her a fitting instrument to arouse the people from despair. Before setting out from Blois she dictated a letter to the English captains before the besieged city, which to them must have seemed arrogant, insulting,

and absurd, in which she commanded them in God's name to return to their own country, assuring them that they fought not merely against the French, but against Him, and hence would be defeated.

The French captains had orders to obey their youthful leader, but not seeing the wisdom of her directions to march to Orleans on the north side of the Loire, they preferred to keep the river between them and the forts of the English. Not daring to disobey her, they misled her as to the position of Orleans, and advanced by the south bank, which proved a mistake, and called forth her indignation, since she did not profess to be governed by military rules, but by divine direction. The city had been defended by a series of forts and other fortifications of great strength, all of which had fallen into the hands of the besiegers; only the walls of the city remained. Joan succeeded in effecting an entrance for herself on a white charger through one of the gates, and the people thronged to meet her as an angel of deliverance, with the wildest demonstrations of joy. Her first act was to repair to the cathedral and offer up thanks to God; her next was to summon the enemy to retire. In the course of a few days the French troops entered the city with supplies. They then issued from the gates to retake the fortifications, which were well defended, cheered and encouraged by the heroic Maid, who stimulated them

to daring deeds. The French were successful in their first assault, which seemed a miracle to the English yeomen, who now felt that they were attacked by unseen forces. Then other forts were assailed with equal success, Joan seeming like an inspired heroine, with her eyes flashing, and her charmed standard waving on to victory. The feats of valor which the French performed were almost incredible. Joan herself did not fight, but stimulated the heroism of her troops. The captains led the assault; the Maid directed their movements. After most of the forts were retaken, the troops wished to rest. Joan knew no rest, nor fear, nor sense of danger. She would hear of no cessation from bloody strife until all the fortifications were regained. At the assault on the last fort she herself was wounded; but she was as insensible to pain as she was to fear. As soon as her wound was dressed she hurried to the ramparts, and encouraged the troops, who were disposed to retire. By evening the last fort or bastile was taken, and the English retired, baffled and full of vengeance. The city was delivered. The siege was raised. Not an Englishman survived south of the Loire.

But only part of the mission of this heroic woman was fulfilled. She had delivered Orleans and saved the southern provinces. She had now the more difficult work to perform of crowning the King in the con-

secrated city, which was in the hands of the enemy, as well as the whole country between Orleans and Rheims. This task seemed to the King and his court to be absolutely impossible. So was the raising of the siege of Orleans, according to all rules of war. Although priests, nobles, and scholars had praised the courage and intrepidity of Joan, and exhorted the nation to trust her, since God seemed to help her, yet to capture a series of fortified cities which were in possession of superior forces seemed an absurdity. Only the common people had full faith in her, for as she was supposed to be specially aided by God, nothing seemed to them an impossibility. They looked upon her as raised up to do most wonderful things, — as one directly inspired. This faith in a girl of eighteen would not have been possible but for her exalted character. Amid the most searching cross-examinations from the learned, she commanded respect by the wisdom of her replies. Every inquiry had been made as to her rural life and character, and nothing could be said against her, but much in her favor; especially her absorbing piety, gentleness, deeds of benevolence, and utter unselfishness.

There was, therefore, a great admiration and respect for this girl, leading to the kindest and most honorable treatment of her from both prelates and nobles. But it was not a chivalric admiration; she did not belong

to a noble family, nor did she defend an institution. She was regarded as a second Deborah, commissioned to deliver a people. Nor could a saint have done her work. Bernard could kindle a crusade by his eloquence, but he could not have delivered Orleans; it required some one who could excite idolatrous homage. Only a woman, in that age, was likely to be revered by the people,—some immaculate virgin. Our remote German ancestors had in their native forests a peculiar reverence for woman. The priestesses of Germanic forests had often incited to battle. Their warnings or encouragements were regarded as voices from Heaven. Perhaps the adoration and worship of the Virgin Mary — so hearty and poetical in the Middle Ages — may have indirectly aided the mission of the Maid of Orleans. The common people saw one of their own order arise and do marvellous things, bringing kings and nobles to her cause. How could she thus triumph over all the inequalities of feudalism unless divinely commissioned? How could she work what seemed to be almost miracles if she had not a supernatural power to assist her? Like the *regina angelorum*, she was *virgo castissima*. And if she was unlike common mortals, perhaps an inspired woman, what she promised would be fulfilled. In consequence of such a feeling an unbounded enthusiasm was excited among the people. They were ready to do her bidding, whether reasonable

or unreasonable to them, for there was a sacred mystery about her, — a reverence that extorted obedience. Worldly-wise statesmen and prelates had not this unbounded admiration, although they doubtless regarded her as a moral phenomenon which they could not understand. Her advice seemed to set aside all human prudence. Nothing seemed more rash or unreasonable than to undertake the conquest of so many fortified cities with such feeble means. It was one thing to animate starving troops to a desperate effort for their deliverance; it was another to assault fortified cities held by the powerful forces which had nearly completed the conquest of France.

The King came to meet the Maid at Tours, and would have bestowed upon her royal honors, for she had rendered a great service. But it was not honors she wanted. She seemed to be indifferent to all personal rewards, and even praises. She wanted only one thing, — an immediate march to Rheims. She even pleaded like a sensible general. She entreated Charles to avail himself of the panic which the raising of the siege of Orleans had produced, before the English could recover from it and bring reinforcements. But the royal council hesitated. It would imperil the King's person to march through a country guarded by hostile troops; and even if he could reach Rheims, it would be more difficult to take the city than to defend Orleans. The King had no

money to pay for an army. The enterprise was not only hazardous but impossible, the royal counsellors argued. But to this earnest and impassioned woman, seeing only one point, there was no such thing as impossibility. The thing *must* be done. The council gave reasons; she brushed them away as cobwebs. What is impossible for God to do? Then they asked her if she heard the voices. She answered, Yes; that she had prayed in secret, complaining of unbelief, and that the voice came to her, which said, "Daughter of God, go on, go on! I will be thy help!" Her whole face glowed and shone like the face of an angel.

The King, half persuaded, agreed to go to Rheims, but not until the English had been driven from the Loire. An army was assembled under the command of the Duke of Alençon, with orders to do nothing without the Maid's advice. Joan went to Selles to prepare for the campaign, and rejoined the army mounted on a black charger, while a page carried her furled banner. The first success was against Jargeau, a strongly fortified town, where she was wounded; but she was up in a moment, and the place was carried, and Joan and Alençon returned in triumph to Orleans. They then advanced against Baugé, another strong place, not merely defended by the late besiegers of Orleans, but a powerful army under Sir John Falstaff and Talbot was advancing to relieve it. Yet Baugé capitulated, the

English being panic-stricken, before the city could be relieved. Then the French and English forces encountered each other in the open field: victory sided with the French; and Falstaff himself fled, with the loss of three thousand men. The whole district then turned against the English, who retreated towards Paris; while a boundless enthusiasm animated the whole French army.

Soldiers and leaders now were equally eager for the march to Rheims; yet the King ingloriously held back, and the coronation seemed to be as distant as ever. But Joan with unexampled persistency insisted on an immediate advance, and the King reluctantly set out for Rheims with twelve thousand men. The first great impediment was the important city of Troyes, which was well garrisoned. After five days were spent before it, and famine began to be felt in the camp, the military leaders wished to raise the siege and return to the south. The Maid implored them to persevere, promising the capture of the city within three days. "We would wait six," said the Archbishop of Rheims, the chancellor and chief adviser of the King, "if we were certain we could take it." Joan mounted her horse, made preparations for the assault, cheered the soldiers, working far into the night; and the next day the city surrendered, and Charles, attended by Joan and his nobles, triumphantly entered the city.

The prestige of the Maid carried the day. The English soldiers dared not contend with one who seemed to be a favorite of Heaven. They had heard of Orleans and Jargeau. Chalons followed the example of Troyes. Then Rheims, when the English learned of the surrender of Troyes and Chalons, made no resistance; and in less than a month after the march had begun, the King entered the city, and was immediately crowned by the Archbishop, Joan standing by his side holding her sacred banner. This coronation was a matter of great political importance. Charles had a rival in the youthful King of England. The succession was disputed. Whoever should first be crowned in the city where the ancient kings were consecrated was likely to be acknowledged by the nation.

The mission of Joan was now accomplished. She had done what she promised, amid incredible difficulties. And now, kneeling before her anointed sovereign, she said, "Gracious King, now is fulfilled the pleasure of God!" And as she spoke she wept. She had given a king to France; and she had given France to her king. Not by might, not by power had she done this, but by the Spirit of the Lord. She asked no other reward for her magnificent service than that her native village should be forever exempt from taxation. Feeling that the work for which she was raised up was done, she would willingly have retired to the seclusion of her

mountain home, but the leaders of France, seeing how much she was adored by the people, were not disposed to part with so great an instrument of success.

And Joan, too, entered with zeal upon those military movements which were to drive away forever the English from the soil of France. Her career had thus far been one of success and boundless enthusiasm; but now the tide turned, and her subsequent life was one of signal failure. Her only strength was in the voices which had bidden her to deliver Orleans and to crown the King. She had no genius for war. Though still brave and dauntless, though still preserving her innocence and her piety, she now made mistakes. She was also thwarted in her plans. She became, perhaps, self-assured and self-confident, and assumed prerogatives that only belonged to the King and his ministers, which had the effect of alienating them. They never secretly admired her, nor fully trusted her. Charles made a truce with the great Duke of Burgundy, who was in alliance with the English. Joan vehemently denounced the truce, and urged immediate and uncompromising action; but timidity, or policy, or political intrigues, defeated her counsels. The King wished to regain Paris by negotiation; all his movements were dilatory. At last his forces approached the capital, and occupied St. Denis. It was determined to attack the city. One corps was led by Joan;

but in the attack she was wounded, and her troops, in spite of her, were forced to retreat. Notwithstanding the retreat and her wound, however, she persevered, though now all to no purpose. The King himself retired, and the attack became a failure. Still Joan desired to march upon Paris for a renewed attack; but the King would not hear of it, and she was sent with troops badly equipped to besiege La Charité, where she again failed. For four weary months she remained inactive. She grew desperate; the voices neither encouraged nor discouraged her. She was now full of sad forebodings, yet her activity continued. She repaired to Compiègne, a city already besieged by the enemy, which she wished to relieve. In a sortie she was outnumbered, and was defeated and taken prisoner by John of Luxemburg, a vassal of the Duke of Burgundy.

The news of this capture produced great exhilaration among the English and Burgundians. Had a great victory been won, the effect could not have been greater. It broke the spell. The Maid was human, like other women; and her late successes were attributed not to her inspiration, but to demoniacal enchantments. She was looked upon as a witch or as a sorceress, and was now guarded with especial care for fear of a rescue, and sent to a strong castle belonging to John of Luxemburg. In Paris, on receipt of the news, the Duke of Bedford caused *Te Deums* to be sung

in all the churches, and the University and the Vicar of the Inquisition demanded of the Duke of Burgundy that she should be delivered to ecclesiastical justice.

The remarkable thing connected with the capture of the Maid was that so little effort was made to rescue her. She had rendered to Charles an inestimable service, and yet he seems to have deserted her; neither he nor his courtiers appeared to regret her captivity, — probably because they were jealous of her. Gratitude was not one of the virtues of feudal kings. What sympathy could feudal barons have with a low-born peasant girl? They had used her; but when she could be useful no longer, they forgot her. Out of sight she was out of mind; and if remembered at all, she was regarded as one who could no longer provoke jealousy. Jealousy is a devouring passion, especially among nobles. The generals of Charles VII. could not bear to have it said that the rescue of France was effected, not by their abilities, but by the inspired enthusiasm of a peasant girl. She had scorned intrigues and baseness, and these marked all the great actors on the stage of history in that age. So they said it was a judgment of Heaven upon her because she would not hear counsel. "No offer for her ransom, no threats of vengeance came from beyond the Loire." But the English, who had suffered most from the loss of Orleans, were eager to get possession of her person, and were willing even to pay

extravagant rewards for her delivery into their hands. They had their vengeance to gratify. They also wished it to appear that Charles VII. was aided by the Devil; that his cause was not the true one; that Henry VI. was the true sovereign of France. The more they could throw discredit and obloquy upon the Maid of Orleans, the better their cause would seem. It was not as a prisoner of war that the English wanted her, but as a victim, whose sorceries could only be punished by death. But they could not try her and condemn her until they could get possession of her; and they could not get possession of her unless they bought her. The needy John of Luxemburg sold her to the English for ten thousand livres, and the Duke of Burgundy received political favors.

The agent employed by the English in this nefarious business was Couchon, the Bishop of Beauvais, who had been driven out of his city by Joan, — an able and learned man, who aspired to the archbishopric of Rouen. He set to work to inflame the University of Paris and the Inquisition against her. The Duke of Bedford did not venture to bring his prize to Paris, but determined to try her in Rouen; and the trial was intrusted to the Bishop of Beauvais, who conducted it after the forms of the Inquisition. It was simply a trial for heresy.

Joan tried for heresy! On that ground there was

never a more innocent person tried by the Inquisition. Her whole life was notoriously virtuous. She had been obedient to the Church; she had advanced no doctrines which were not orthodox. She was too ignorant to be a heretic; she had accepted whatever her spiritual teacher had taught her; in fact, she was a Catholic saint. She lived in the ecstasies of religious faith like a Saint Theresa. She spent her time in prayer and religious exercises; she regularly confessed, and partook of the sacraments of the Church. She did not even have a single sceptical doubt; she simply affirmed that she obeyed voices that came from God.

Nothing could be more cruel than the treatment of this heroic girl, and all under the forms of ecclesiastical courts. It was the diabolical design of her enemies to make it appear that she had acted under the influence of the Devil; that she was a heretic and a sorceress. Nothing could be more forlorn than her condition. No efforts had been made to ransom her. She was alone, and unsupported by friends, having not a single friendly counsellor. She was carried to the castle of Rouen and put in an iron cage, and chained to its bars; she was guarded by brutal soldiers, was mocked by those who came to see her, and finally was summoned before her judges predetermined on her death. They went through the forms of trial, hoping to extort from the Maid some damaging confessions, or

to entangle her with their sophistical and artful questions. Nothing perhaps on our earth has ever been done more diabolically than under the forms of ecclesiastical law; nothing can be more atrocious than the hypocrisies and acts of inquisitors. The judges of Joan extorted from her that she had revelations, but she refused to reveal what these had been. She was asked whether she was in a state of grace. If she said she was not, she would be condemned as an outcast from divine favor; if she said she was, she would be condemned for spiritual pride. All such traps were set for this innocent girl. But she acquitted herself wonderfully well, and showed extraordinary good sense. She warded off their cunning and puerile questions. They tried every means to entrap her. They asked her in what shape Saint Michael had appeared to her; whether or no he was naked; whether he had hair; whether she understood the feelings of those who had once kissed her feet; whether she had not cursed God in her attempt to escape at Beauvoir; whether it was for her merit that God sent His angel; whether God hated the English; whether her victory was founded on her banner or on herself; when had she learned to ride a horse.

The judges framed seventy accusations against her, mostly frivolous, and some unjust, — to the effect that she had received no religious training; that she had

worn mandrake; that she dressed in man's attire; that she had bewitched her banner and her ring; that she believed her apparitions were saints and angels; that she had blasphemed; and other charges equally absurd. Under her rigid trials she fell sick; but they restored her, reserving her for a more cruel fate. All the accusations and replies were sent to Paris, and the learned doctors decreed, under English influence, that Joan was a heretic and a sorceress.

After another series of insulting questions, she was taken to the market-place of Rouen to receive sentence, and then returned to her gloomy prison, where they mercifully allowed her to confess and receive the sacrament. She was then taken in a cart, under guard of eight hundred soldiers, to the place of execution; rudely dragged to the funeral pile, fastened to a stake, and fire set to the faggots. She expired, exclaiming, "Jesus, Jesus! My voices, my voices!"

Thus was sacrificed one of the purest and noblest women in the whole history of the world, — a woman who had been instrumental in delivering her country, but without receiving either honor or gratitude from those for whom she had fought and conquered. She died a martyr to the cause of patriotism, — not for religion, but for her country. She died among enemies, unsupported by friends or by those whom she had so greatly benefited, and with as few religious consolations

as it was possible to give. Never was there greater cruelty and injustice inflicted on an innocent and noble woman. The utmost ingenuity of vindictive priests never extorted from her a word which criminated her, though they subjected her to inquisitorial examinations for days and weeks. Burned as an infidel, her last words recognized the Saviour in whom she believed; burned as a witch, she never confessed to anything but the voices of God. Her heroism, even at the stake, should have called out pity and admiration; but her tormentors were insensible to both. She was burned really from vengeance, because she had turned the tide of conquest. "The Jews," says Michelet, "never exhibited the rage against Jesus that the English did against the Pucelle," in whom purity, sweetness, and heroic goodness dwelt. Never was her life stained by a single cruel act. In the midst of her torments she did not reproach her tormentors. In the midst of her victories she wept for the souls of those who were killed; and while she incited others to combat, she herself did not use her sword. In man's attire she showed a woman's soul. Pity and gentleness were as marked as courage and self-confidence.

It is one of the most insolvable questions in history why so little effort was made by the French to save the Maid's life. It is strange that the University of Paris should have decided against her, after she had

rendered such transcendent services. Why should the savants of that age have treated her as a witch, when she showed all the traits of an angel? Why should not the most unquestioning faith have preserved her from the charge of heresy? Alas! she was only a peasant girl, and the great could not bear to feel that the country had been saved by a peasant. Even chivalry, which worshipped women, did not come to Joan's aid. How great must have been feudal distinctions when such a heroic woman was left to perish! How deep the ingratitude of the King and his court, to have made no effort to save her!

Joan made one mistake: after the coronation of Charles VII. she should have retired from the field of war, for her work was done. Such a transcendent heroism could not have sunk into obscurity. But this was not to be; she was to die as a martyr to her cause.

After her death the English carried on war with new spirit for a time, and Henry VI. of England was crowned in Paris, at Notre Dame. He was crowned, however, by an English, not by a French prelate. None of the great French nobles even were present. The coronation was a failure. Gradually all France was won over to the side of Charles. He was a contemptible monarch, but he was the legitimate King of France. All classes desired peace; all parties were weary of war. The

Treaty of Arras, in 1435, restored peace between Charles and Philip of Burgundy; and in the same year the Duke of Bedford died. In 1436 Charles took possession of Paris. In 1445 Henry VI. married Margaret of Anjou, a kinswoman of Charles VII. In 1448 Charles invaded Normandy, and expelled the English from the duchy which for four hundred years had belonged to the kings of England. Soon after Guienne fell. In 1453 Calais alone remained to England, after a war of one hundred years.

At last a tardy justice was done to the memory of her who had turned the tide of conquest. The King, ungrateful as he had been, now ennobled her family and their descendants, even in the female line, and bestowed upon them pensions and offices. In 1452, twenty years after the martyrdom, the Pope commissioned the Archbishop of Rheims and two other prelates, aided by an inquisitor, to inquire into the trial of Joan of Arc. They met in Notre Dame. Messengers were sent into the country where she was born, to inquire into her history; and all testified — priests and peasants — to the moral beauty of her character, to her innocent and blameless life, her heroism in battle, and her good sense in counsel. And the decision of the prelates was that her visions came from God; that the purity of her motives and the good she did to her country justified her in leaving her parents

and wearing a man's dress. They pronounced the trial at Rouen to have been polluted with wrong and calumny, and freed her name from every shadow of disgrace. The people of Orleans instituted an annual religious festival to her honor. The Duke of Orleans gave a grant of land to her brothers, who were ennobled. The people of Rouen raised a stone cross to her memory in the market-place where she was burned. In later times, the Duchess of Orleans, wife of the son and heir of Louis Philippe, modelled with her own hands an exquisite statue of Joan of Arc. But the most beautiful and impressive tribute which has ever been paid to her name and memory was a *fête* of three days' continuance, in 1856, on the anniversary of the deliverance of Orleans, when the celebrated Bishop Dupanloup pronounced one of the most eloquent eulogies ever offered to the memory of a heroine or benefactor. That ancient city never saw so brilliant a spectacle as that which took place in honor of its immortal deliverer, who was executed so cruelly under the superintendence of a Christian bishop, — one of those iniquities in the name of justice which have so often been perpetrated on this earth. It was a powerful nation which killed her, and one equally powerful which abandoned her.

But the martyrdom of Joan of Arc is an additional confirmation of the truth that it is only by self-sacrifice

that great deliverances have been effected. Nothing in the moral government of God is more mysterious than the fate which usually falls to the lot of great benefactors. To us it seems sad and unjust; and nothing can reconcile us to the same but the rewards of a future and higher life. And yet amid the flames there arise the voices which save nations. Joan of Arc bequeathed to her country, especially to the common people, some great lessons; namely, not to despair amid great national calamities; to believe in God as the true deliverer from impending miseries, who, however, works through natural causes, demanding personal heroism as well as faith. There was great grandeur in that peasant girl, — in her exalted faith at Domremy, in her heroism at Orleans, in her triumph at Rheims, in her trial and martyrdom at Rouen. But unless she had suffered, nothing would have remained of this grandeur in the eyes of posterity. The injustice and meanness with which she was treated have created a lasting sympathy for her in the hearts of her nation. She was great because she died for her country, serene and uncomplaining amid injustice, cruelty, and ingratitude, — the injustice of an ecclesiastical court presided over by a learned bishop; the cruelty of the English generals and nobles; the ingratitude of her own sovereign, who made no effort to redeem her. She was sold by one potentate to another as if she were merchandise, — as if she were a slave. And

those graces and illuminations which under other circumstances would have exalted her into a catholic saint, like an Elizabeth of Hungary or a Catherine of Sienna, were turned against her, by diabolical executioners, as a proof of heresy and sorcery. We repeat again, never was enacted on this earth a greater injustice. Never did a martyr perish with more triumphant trust in the God whose aid she had so uniformly invoked. And it was this triumphant Christian faith as she ascended the funeral pyre which has consecrated the visions and the voices under whose inspiration the Maid led a despairing nation to victory and a glorious future.

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SAINT THERESA.

A. D. 1515–1582.

RELIGIOUS ENTHUSIASM.

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RELIGIOUS ENTHUSIASM.

I HAVE already painted in Cleopatra, to the best of my ability, the Pagan woman of antiquity, revelling in the pleasures of vanity and sensuality, with a feeble moral sense, and without any distinct recognition of God or of immortality. The genius of Paganism was simply the deification of the Venus Polyhymnia, — the adornment and pleasure of what is perishable in man. It directed all the energies of human nature to the pampering and decorating of this mortal body, not believing that the mind and soul which animate it, and which are the sources of all its glory, would ever live beyond the grave. A few sages believed differently, — men who rose above the spirit of Paganism, but not such men as Alexander, or Cæsar, or Antony, the foremost men of all the world in grand ambitions and successes. Taking it for granted that this world is the only theatre for enjoyment, or action, or thought, men naturally said, "Let us eat and drink and be merry, for to-morrow

we die." And hence no higher life was essayed than that which furnished sensual enjoyments, or incited an ambition to be strong and powerful. Of course, riches were sought above everything, since these furnished the means of gratifying those pleasures which were most valued, or stimulating that vanity whose essence is self-idolatry.

With this universal rush of humanity after pleasures which centred in the body, the soul was left dishonored and uncared for, except by a few philosophers. I do not now speak of the mind, for there were intellectual pleasures derived from conversation, books, and works of art. And some called the mind divine, in distinction from matter; some speculated on the nature of each, and made mind and matter in perpetual antagonism, as the good and evil forces of the universe. But the prevailing opinion was that the whole man perished, or became absorbed in the elemental forces of nature, or reappeared again in new forms upon the earth, to expiate those sins of which human nature is conscious. To some men were given longings after immortality, not absolute convictions, — men like Plato, Socrates, and Cicero. But I do not speak of these illustrious exceptions; I mean the great mass of the people, especially the rich and powerful and pleasure-seeking, — those whose supreme delight was in banquets, palaces, or intoxicating excitements, like chariot-racings and

gladiatorial shows; yea, triumphal processions to raise the importance of the individual self, and stimulate vanity and pride.

Hence Paganism put a small value, comparatively, on even intellectual enjoyments. It cultivated those arts which appealed to the senses more than to the mind; it paid dearly for any sort of intellectual training which could be utilized, — oratory, for instance, to enable a lawyer to gain a case, or a statesman to control a mob; it rewarded those poets who could sing blended praises to Bacchus and Venus, or who could excite the passions at the theatre. But it paid still higher prices to athletes and dancers, and almost no price at all to those who sought to stimulate a love of knowledge for its own sake, — men like Socrates, for example, who walked barefooted, and lived on fifty dollars a year, and who at last was killed out of pure hatred for the truths he told and the manner in which he told them, — this martyrdom occurring in the most intellectual city of the world. In both Greece and Rome there was an intellectual training for men bent on utilitarian ends; even as we endow schools of science and technology to enable us to conquer nature, and to become strong and rich and comfortable; but there were no schools for women, whose intellects were disdained, and who were valued only as servants or animals, — either to drudge, or to please the senses.

But even if there were some women in Paganism of high mental education, — if women sometimes rose above their servile condition by pure intellect, and amused men by their wit and humor, — still their souls were little thought of. Now, it is the soul of woman — not her mind, and still less her body — which elevates her, and makes her, in some important respects, the superior of man himself. He has dominion over her by force of will, intellect, and physical power. When she has dominion over him, it is by those qualities which come from her soul, — her superior nature, greater than both mind and body. Paganism never recognized the superior nature, especially in woman, — that which must be fed, even in this world, or there will be constant unrest and discontent. And inasmuch as Paganism did not feed it, women were unhappy, especially those who had great capacities. They may have been comfortable, but they were not contented.

Hence, women made no great advance either in happiness or in power, until Christianity revealed the greatness of the soul, its perpetual longings, its infinite capacities, and its future satisfactions. The spiritual exercises of the soul then became the greatest source of comfort amid those evils which once ended in despair. With every true believer, the salvation of so precious a thing necessarily became the end of life, for Christianity taught that the soul might be lost. In view of the

soul's transcendent value, therefore, the pleasures of the body became of but little account in comparison. Riches are good, power is desirable; eating and drinking are very pleasant; praise, flattery, admiration, — all these things delight us, and under Paganism were sought and prized. But Christianity said, "What shall a man give in exchange for his soul?"

Christianity, then, set about in earnest to rescue this soul which Paganism had disregarded. In consequence of this, women began to rise, and shine in a new light They gained a new charm, even moral beauty, — yea a new power, so that they could laugh at ancient foes and say triumphantly, when those foes sought to crush them, "O Grave, where is thy victory? O Death, where is thy sting?" There is no beauty among women like this moral beauty, whose seat is in the soul. It is not only a radiance, but it is a defence: it protects women from the wrath and passion of men. With glory irradiating every feature, it says to the boldest, Thus far shalt thou come and no farther. It is a benediction to the poor and a welcome to the rich. It shines with such unspeakable loveliness, so rich in blessing and so refined in ecstasy, that men gaze with more than admiration, even with sentiments bordering on that adoration which the Middle Ages felt for the mother of our Lord, and which they also bestowed upon departed saints. In the immortal paintings of Raphael and

Murillo we get some idea of this moral beauty, which is so hard to copy.

So woman passed gradually from contempt and degradation to the veneration of men, when her soul was elevated by the power which Paganism never knew. But Christianity in the hands of degenerate Romans and Gothic barbarians made many mistakes in its efforts to save so priceless a thing as a human soul. Among other things, it instituted monasteries and convents, both for men and women, in which they sought to escape the contaminating influences which had degraded them. If Paganism glorified the body, monasticism despised it. In the fierce protests against the peculiar sins which had marked Pagan life, — gluttony, wine-drinking, unchastity, ostentatious vanities, and turbulent mirth, — monasticism decreed abstinence, perpetual virginity, the humblest dress, the entire disuse of ornaments, silence, and meditation. This form of life, it was believed, fortified the spirit against temptation. Moreover, monasticism encouraged whatever it thought would make the soul triumphant over the body, almost independent of it. Whatever would feed the soul, it said, should be sought, and whatever would pamper the body should be avoided.

As a natural consequence of all this, piety gradually came to seek its most congenial home in monastic retreats, and to take on a dreamy, visionary, and intro-

spective mood. The "saints" saw visions of both angels and devils, and a superstitious age believed in their revelations. The angels appeared to comfort and sustain the soul in temptations and trials, and the devils came to pervert and torment it. Good judgment and severe criticism were lost to the Church; and, moreover, the gloomy theology of the Middle Ages, all based on the fears of endless physical torments, — for the wretched body was the source of all evil, and therefore must be punished, — gave sometimes a repulsive form to piety itself. Intellectually, that piety now excites our sympathy, because it was so much mixed up with dreams and ecstasies and visions and hallucinations. It produces a moral aversion also, because it was austere, inhuman, and sometimes cruel. Both monks and nuns, when they conformed to the rules of their order, were sad, solitary, dreary-looking people, although their faces shone occasionally in the light of ecstatic visions of heaven and the angels.

But whatever mistakes monasticism made, however severe the religious life of the Middle Ages, — in fact, all its social life, — still it must be admitted that the aim of the time was high. Men and women were enslaved by superstitions, but they were not Pagan. Our own age is, in some respects, more Pagan than were the darkest times of mediæval violence and priestly despotism, since we are reviving the very things against

which Christianity protested as dangerous and false, — the pomps, the banquets, the ornaments, the arts of the old Pagan world.

Now, all this is preliminary to what I have to say of Saint Theresa. We cannot do justice to this remarkable woman without considering the sentiments of her day, and those circumstances that controlled her. We cannot properly estimate her piety — that for which she was made a saint in the Roman calendar — without being reminded of the different estimate which Paganism and Christianity placed upon the soul, and consequently the superior condition of women in our modern times. Nor must we treat lightly or sneeringly that institution which was certainly one of the steps by which women rose in the scale both of religious and social progress. For several ages nuns were the only charitable women, except queens and princesses, of whom we have record. But they were drawn to their calm retreats, not merely to serve God more effectually, nor merely to perform deeds of charity, but to study. As we have elsewhere said, the convents in those days were schools no less than asylums and hospitals, and were especially valued for female education. However, in these retreats religion especially became a passion. There was a fervor in it which in our times is unknown. It was not a matter of opinion, but of faith. In these

times there may be more wisdom, but in the Middle Ages there was more zeal and more unselfishness and more intensity, — all which is illustrated by the sainted woman I propose to speak of.

Saint Theresa was born at Avila, in Castile, in the year 1515, at the close of the Middle Ages; but she really belonged to the Middle Ages, since all the habits, customs, and opinions of Spain at that time were mediæval. The Reformation never gained a foothold in Spain. None of its doctrines penetrated that country, still less modified or changed its religious customs, institutions, or opinions. And hence Saint Theresa virtually belonged to the age of Bernard, and Anselm, and Elizabeth of Hungary. She was of a good family as much distinguished for virtues as for birth. Both her father and mother were very religious and studious, reading good books, and practising the virtues which Catholicism ever enjoined, — alms-giving to the poor, and kindness to the sick and infirm, — truthful, chaste, temperate, and God-fearing. They had twelve children, all good, though Theresa seems to have been the favorite, from her natural sprightliness and enthusiasm. Among the favorite books of the Middle Ages were the lives of saints and martyrs; and the history of these martyrs made so great an impression on the mind of the youthful Theresa that she and one of her brothers meditated a flight into Africa that they might be put

to death by the Moors, and thus earn the crown of martyrdom, as well as the eternal rewards in heaven which martyrdom was supposed to secure. This scheme being defeated by their parents, they sought to be hermits in the garden which belonged to their house, playing the part of monks and nuns.

At eleven, Theresa lost her mother, and took to reading romances, which, it seems, were books of knight-errantry, at the close of the chivalric period. These romances were innumerable, and very extravagant and absurd, and were ridiculed by Cervantes, half-a-century afterwards, in his immortal "Don Quixote." Although Spain was mediæval in its piety in the sixteenth century, this was the period of its highest intellectual culture, especially in the drama. De Vega and Cervantes were enough of themselves to redeem Spain from any charges of intellectual stupidity. But for the Inquisition and the demoralization which followed the conquests of Cortés and Pizarro, under the reign of the benighted Philip II, Spain might have rivalled Germany, France, and England in the greatness of her literature. At this time there must have been considerable cultivation among the class to which Theresa belonged.

Although she never was sullied by what are called mortal sins, it would appear that as a girl of fourteen Theresa was, like most other girls, fond of dress and

perfumes and ornaments, elaborate hair-dressing, and of anything which would make the person attractive. Her companions also were gay young ladies of rank, as fond of finery as she was, whose conversation was not particularly edifying, but whose morals were above reproach. Theresa was sent to a convent in her native town by her father, that she might be removed from the influence of gay companions, especially her male cousins, who could not be denied the house. At first she was quite unhappy, finding the convent dull, *triste*, and strict. I cannot conceive of a convent being a very pleasant place for a worldly young lady, in any country or in any age of the world. Its monotony and routine and mechanical duties must ever have been irksome. The pleasing manners and bright conversation of Theresa caused the nuns to take an unusual interest in her; and one of them in particular exercised a great influence upon her, so that she was inclined at times to become a nun herself, though not of a very strict order, since she was still fond of the pleasures of the world.

At sixteen, Theresa's poor health made it necessary for her to return to her father's house. When she recovered she spent some time with her uncle, afterwards a monk, who made her read good books, and impressed upon her the vanity of the world. In a few months she resolved to become a nun, — out of servile fear

rather than love, as she avers. The whole religious life of the Middle Ages was based on fear, — the fear of being tortured forever by devils and hell. So universal and powerful was this fear that it became the leading idea of the age, from which very few were ever emancipated. On this idea were based the excommunications, the interdicts, and all the spiritual weapons by which the clergy ruled the minds of the people. On this their ascendency rested; they would have had but little power without it. It was therefore their interest to perpetuate it. And as they ruled by exciting fears, so they themselves were objects of fear rather than of love.

All this tended to make the Middle Ages gloomy, funereal, repulsive, austere. There was a time when I felt a sort of poetic interest in these dark times, and called them ages of faith; but the older I grow, and the more I read and reflect, the more dreary do those ages seem to me. Think of a state of society when everything suggested wrath and vengeance, even in the character of God, and when this world was supposed to be under the dominion of devils! Think of an education which impressed on the minds of interesting young girls that the trifling sins which they committed every day, and which proceeded from the exuberance of animal spirits, justly doomed them to everlasting burnings, without expiations, — a creed so cruel as to undermine the health, and make life itself a misery! Think of a

spiritual despotism so complete that confessors and spiritual fathers could impose or remove these expiations, and thus open the door to heaven or hell!

And yet this despotism was the logical result of a generally accepted idea, instead of the idea being an outgrowth of the despotism, since the clergy, who controlled society by working on its fears, were themselves as complete victims and slaves as the people whom they led. This idea was that the soul would be lost unless sins were expiated, and expiated by self-inflicted torments on the body. Paul taught a more cheerful doctrine of forgiveness, based on divine and infinite love, — on faith and repentance. The Middle Ages also believed in repentance, but taught that repentance and penance were synonymous. The asceticism of the Church in its conflict with Paganism led to this perversion of apostolic theology. The very idea that Christianity was sent to subvert, — that is, the old Oriental idea of self-expiation, seen among the fakirs and sofis and Brahmins alike, and in a less repulsive form among the Pharisees, — became once again the ruling idea of theologians. The theologians of the Middle Ages taught this doctrine of penance and self-expiation with peculiar zeal and sincerity; and fear rather than love ruled the Christian world. Hence the austerity of convent life. Its piety centred in the perpetual crucifixion of the body. in the suppression of desires and

pleasures which are perfectly innocent. The highest ideal of Christian life, according to convent rules, was a living and protracted martyrdom, and in some cases even the degradation of our common humanity. Christianity nowhere enjoins the eradication of passions and appetites, but the control of them. It would not mutilate and distigure the body, for it is a sacred temple, to be made beautiful and attractive. On the other hand the Middle Ages strove to make the body appear repulsive, and the most loathsome forms of misery and disease to be hailed as favorite modes of penance. And as Christ suffered agonies on the cross, so the imitation of Christ was supposed to be a cheerful and ready acceptance of voluntary humiliation and bodily torments, — the more dreadful to bear, the more acceptable to Deity as a propitiation for sin. Is this statement denied? Read the biographies of the saints of the Middle Ages. See how penance, and voluntary suffering, and unnecessary exposure of the health, and eager attention to the sick in loathsome and contagious diseases, and the severest and most protracted fastings and vigils, enter into their piety; and how these extorted popular admiration, and received the applause and rewards of the rulers of the Church. I never read a book which left on my mind such repulsive impressions of mediæval piety as the Life of Catherine of Sienna, by her confessor, — himself one of the great ecclesiastical dignitaries of the age. I never read any-

thing so debasing and degrading to our humanity. One turns with disgust from the narration of her lauded penances.

So we see in the Church of the Middle Ages — the Church of Saint Theresa — two great ideas struggling for the mastery, yet both obscured and perverted: faith in a crucified Redeemer, which gave consolation and hope; and penance, rather than repentance, which sought to impose the fetters of the ancient spiritual despotisms. In the early Church, faith and repentance went hand in hand together to conquer the world, and to introduce joy and peace and hope among believers. In the Middle Ages, faith was divorced from repentance, and took penance instead as a companion, — an old enemy; so that there was discord in the Christian camp, and fears returned, and joys were clouded. Sometimes faith prevailed over penance, as in the monastery of Bec, where Anselm taught a cheerful philosophy, — or in the monastery of Clairvaux, where Bernard lived in seraphic ecstasies, his soul going out in love and joy; and then again penance prevailed, as in those grim retreats where hard inquisitors inflicted their cruel torments. But penance, on the whole, was the ruling power, and cast over society its funereal veil of dreariness and fear. Yet penance, enslaving as it was, still clung to the infinite value of the soul, the grandest fact in all revelations, and hence society did not relax into Pagan-

ism. Penance would save the soul, though surrounding it with gloom, maceration, heavy labors, bitter tears, terrible anxieties. The wearied pilgrim, the isolated monk, the weeping nun, the groaning peasant, the penitent baron, were not thrown into absolute despair, since there was a possibility of appeasing divine wrath, and since they all knew that Christ had died in order to save some, — yea, all who conformed to the direction of those spiritual guides which the Church and the age imposed.

Such was Catholic theology when Theresa — an enthusiastic, amiable, and virtuous girl of sixteen, but at one time giddy and worldly — wished to enter a convent for the salvation of her soul. She says she was influenced *by servile fear*, and not by love. It is now my purpose to show how this servile fear was gradually subdued by divine grace, and how she became radiant with *love*, — in short, an emancipated woman, in all the glorious liberty of the gospel of Christ; although it was not until she had passed through a most melancholy experience of bondage to the leading ideas of her Church and age. It is this emancipation which made her one of the great women of history, not complete and entire, but still remarkable, especially for a Spanish woman. It was love casting out fear.

After a mental struggle of three months, Theresa resolved to become a nun. But her father objected,

partly out of his great love for her, and partly on account of her delicate and fragile body. Her health had always been poor: she was subject to fainting fits and burning fevers. Whether her father, at last, consented to her final retirement from the world I do not discover from her biography; but, with his consent or without it, she entered the convent and assumed the religious habit — not without bitter pangs on leaving her home, for she did violence to her feelings, having no strong desire for monastic seclusion, and being warmly attached to her father. Neither love to God nor a yearning after monastic life impelled the sacrifice, as she admits, but a perverted conscience. She felt herself in danger of damnation for her sins, and wished to save her soul, and knew no other way than to enter upon the austerities of the convent, which she endured with remarkable patience and submission, suffering not merely from severities to which she was unaccustomed, but great illness in consequence of them. A year was passed in protracted miseries, amounting to martyrdom, from fainting fits, heart palpitations, and other infirmities of the body. The doctors could do nothing for her, and her father was obliged to order her removal to a more healthful monastery, where no vows of enclosure were taken.

And there she remained a year, with no relief to her sufferings for three months. Her only recreation was

books, which fortified her courage. She sought instruction, but found no one who could instruct her so as to give repose to her struggling soul. She endeavored to draw her thoughts from herself by reading. She could not even pray without a book. She was afraid to be left alone with herself. Her situation was made still worse by the fact that her superiors did not understand her. When they noticed that she sought solitude, and shed tears for her sins, they fancied she had a discontented disposition, and added to her unhappiness by telling her so. But she conformed to all the rules, irksome or not, and endured every mortification, and even performed acts of devotion which were not required. She envied the patience of a poor woman who died of the most painful ulcers, and thought it would be a blessing if she could be afflicted in the same way, in order, as she said, to purchase eternal good. And this strange desire was fulfilled, for a severe and painful malady afflicted her for three years.

Again was she removed to some place for cure, for her case was desperate. And here her patience was supernal. Yet patience under bodily torments did not give the sought-for peace. It happened that a learned ecclesiastic of noble family lived in this place, and she sought relief in confessions to him. With a rare judgment and sense, and perhaps pride and delicacy, she disliked to confess to ignorant priests. She said that

the half-learned did her more harm than good. The learned were probably more lenient to her, and more in sympathy with her, and assured her that those sins were only venial which she had supposed were mortal. But she soon was obliged to give up this confessor, since he began to confess to her, and to confess sins in comparison with which the sins she confessed were venial indeed. He not only told her of his slavery to a bad woman, but confessed a love for Theresa herself, which she of course repelled, though not with the aversion she ought to have felt. It seems that her pious talk was instrumental in effecting his deliverance from a base bondage. He soon after died, and piously, she declared; so that she considered it certain that his soul was saved.

Theresa remained three months in this place, in most grievous sufferings, for the remedy was worse than the disease. Again her father took her home, since all despaired of her recovery, her nervous system being utterly shattered, and her pains incessant by day and by night; the least touch was a torment. At last she sank into a state of insensibility from sheer exhaustion, so that she was supposed to be dying, even to be dead; and her grave was dug, and the sacrament of extreme unction was administered. She rallied from this prostration, however, and returned to the convent, though in a state of extreme weakness, and so remained for eight months. For three years she was a cripple and could move

about only on all-fours; but she was resigned to the will of God.

It was then, amid the maladies of her body, that she found relief to her over-burdened soul in prayer. She no longer prayed with a book, mechanically and by rote, but mentally, with earnestness, and with the understanding. And she prayed directly to God Almighty, and thereby came, she says, to love Him. And with prayer came new virtues. She now ceases to speak ill of people, and persuades others to cease from all detractions, so that absent people are safe. She speaks of God as her heavenly physician, who alone could cure her. She now desires, not sickness to show her patience, but health in order to serve God better. She begins to abominate those forms and ceremonies to which so many were slavishly devoted, and which she regards as superstitious. But she has drawbacks and relapses, and is pulled back by temptations and vanities, so that she is ashamed to approach God with that familiarity which frequent prayer requires. Then she fears hell, which she thinks she deserves. She has not yet reached the placidity of a pardoned soul. Perfection is very slow to be reached, and that is what the Middle Ages required in order to exorcise the fears of divine wrath. Not, however, until these fears are exorcised can there be the liberty of the gospel or the full triumph of love.

Thus for several years Theresa passed a miserable life, since the more she prayed the more she realized her faults; and these she could not correct, because her soul was not a master, but a slave. She was drawn two ways, in opposite directions. She made good resolutions, but failed to keep them; and then there was a deluge of tears, — the feeling that she was the weakest and wickedest of all creatures. For nearly twenty years she passed through this tempestuous sea, between failings and risings, enjoying neither the sweetness of God nor the pleasures of the world. But she did not lose the courage of applying herself to mental prayer. This fortified her; this was her stronghold; this united her to God. She was persuaded if she persevered in this, whatever sin she might commit, or whatever temptation might be presented, that, in the end, her Lord would bring her safe to the port of salvation. So she prayed without ceasing. She especially insisted on the importance of mental prayer (which is, I suppose, what is called holy meditation) as a sort of treaty of friendship with her Lord. At last she feels that the Lord assists her, in His great love, and she begins to trust in Him. She declares that prayer is the gate through which the Lord bestows upon her His favors; and it is only through this that any comfort comes. Then she begins to enjoy sermons, which once tormented her, whether good or bad, so long

as God is spoken of, for she now loves Him; and she cannot hear too much of Him she loves. She delights to see her Lord's picture, since it aids her to see Him inwardly, and to feel that He is always near her, which is her constant desire.

About this time the "Confessions of Saint Augustine" were put into Theresa's hands, — one of the few immortal books which are endeared to the heart of Christians. This book was a comfort and enlightenment to her, she thinking that the Lord would forgive her, as He did those saints who had been great sinners, because He loved them. When she meditated on the conversion of Saint Augustine, — how he heard the voice in the garden, — it seemed to her that the Lord equally spoke to her, and thus she was filled with gratitude and joy. After this, her history is the enumeration of the favors which God gave her, and of the joys of prayer, which seemed to her to be the very joys of heaven. She longs more and more for her divine Spouse, to whom she is spiritually wedded. She pants for Him as the hart pants for the water-brook. She cannot be separated from Him; neither death nor hell can separate her from His love. He is infinitely precious to her. — He is chief among ten thousand. She blesses His holy name. In her exceeding joy she cries, "O Lord of my soul, O my eternal Good!" In her ecstasy she sings, —

"Absent from Thee, my Saviour dear!
I call not life this living here.
Ah, Lord! my light and living breath!
Take me, oh, take me from this death!
And burst the bars that sever me
From my true life above!
Think how I die Thy face to see,
And cannot live away from Thee,
O my Eternal Love!"

Thus she composes canticles and dries her tears, feeling that the love of God does not consist in these, but in serving Him with fidelity and devotion. She is filled with the graces of humility, and praises God that she is permitted to speak of things relating to Him. She is filled also with strength, since it is He who strengthens her. She is perpetually refreshed, since she drinks from a divine fountain. She is in a sort of trance of delight from the enjoyment of divine blessings. Her soul is elevated to rapture. She feels that her salvation, through grace, is assured. She no longer has fear of devils or of hell, since with an everlasting love she is beloved; and her lover is Christ. She has broken the bondage of the Middle Ages, and she has broken it by prayer. She is an emancipated woman, and can now afford to devote herself to practical duties. She visits the sick, she dispenses charities, she gives wise counsels; for with all her visionary piety she has good sense in the things of the world, and is as practical as she is spiritual and transcendental.

And all this in the midst of visions. I will not dwell on these visions, the weak point in her religious life, though they are visions of beauty, not of devils, of celestial spirits who came to comfort her, and who filled her soul with joy and peace.

> "A little bird I am,
> Shut from the fields of air,
> And in my cage I sit and sing
> To Him who placed me there;
> Well pleased a prisoner to be,
> Because, my God, it pleases Thee."

She is bathed in the glory of her Lord, and her face shines with the radiance of heaven, with the moral beauty which the greatest of Spanish painters represents on his canvas. And she is beloved by everybody, is universally venerated for her virtues as well as for her spiritual elevation. The greatest ecclesiastical dignitaries come to see her, and encourage her, and hold converse with her, for her intellectual gifts were as remarkable as her piety. Her conversation, it appears, was charming. Her influence over the highest people was immense. She pleased, she softened, and she elevated all who knew her. She reigned in her convent as Madame de Staël reigned in her *salon*. She was supposed to have reached perfection; and yet she never claimed perfection, but sadly felt her imperfections, and confessed them. She was very fond of the

society of learned men, from first to last, but formed no friendships except with those whom she believed to be faithful servants of God.

At this period Theresa meditated the foundation of a new convent of the Carmelite order, to be called St. Joseph, after the name of her patron saint. But here she found great difficulty, as her plans were not generally approved by her superiors or the learned men whom she consulted. They were deemed impracticable, for she insisted that the convent should not be endowed, nor be allowed to possess property. In all the monasteries of the Middle Ages, the monks, if individually poor, might be collectively rich; and all the famous monasteries came gradually to be as well endowed as Oxford and Cambridge universities were. This proved, in the end, an evil, since the monks became lazy and luxurious and proud. They could afford to be idle; and with idleness and luxury came corruption. The austere lives of the founders of these monasteries gave them a reputation for sanctity and learning, and this brought them wealth. Rich people who had no near relatives were almost certain to leave them something in their wills. And the richer the monasteries became, the greedier their rulers were.

Theresa determined to set a new example. She did not institute any stricter rules; she was emancipated from austerities; but she resolved to make her nuns

dependent on the Lord rather than on rich people. Nor was she ambitious of founding a large convent. She thought that thirteen women together were enough. Gradually she brought the provincial of the order over to her views, and also the celebrated friar, Peter of Alcantara, the most eminent ecclesiastic in Spain. But the townspeople of Avila were full of opposition. They said it was better for Theresa to remain where she was; that there was no necessity for another convent, and that it was a very foolish thing. So great was the outcry, that the provincial finally withdrew his consent; he also deemed the revenue to be too uncertain. Then the advice of a celebrated Dominican was sought, who took eight days to consider the matter, and was at first inclined to recommend the abandonment of the project, but on further reflection he could see no harm in it, and encouraged it. So a small house was bought, for the nuns must have some shelter over their heads. The provincial changed his opinion again, and now favored the enterprise. It was a small affair, but a great thing to Theresa. Her friend the Dominican wrote letters to Rome, and the provincial offered no further objection. Moreover, she had bright visions of celestial comforters.

But the superior of her convent, not wishing the enterprise to succeed, and desiring to get her out of the way, sent Theresa to Toledo, to visit and comfort a

sick lady of rank, with whom she remained six months. Here she met many eminent men, chiefly ecclesiastics of the Dominican and Jesuit orders; and here she inspired other ladies to follow her example, among others a noble nun of her own order, who sold all she had and walked to Rome barefooted in order to obtain leave to establish a religious house like that proposed by Theresa. At last there came letters and a brief from Rome for the establishment of the convent, and Theresa was elected prioress, in the year 1562.

But the opposition still continued, and the most learned and influential were resolved on disestablishing the house. The matter at last reached the ears of the King and council, and an order came requiring a statement as to how the monastery was to be founded. Everything was discouraging. Theresa, as usual, took refuge in prayer, and went to the Lord and said, "This house is not mine; it is established for Thee; and since there is no one to conduct the case, do Thou undertake it." From that time she considered the matter settled. Nevertheless the opposition continued, much to the astonishment of Theresa, who could not see how a prioress and twelve nuns could be injurious to the city. Finally, opposition so far ceased that it was agreed that the house should be unmolested, provided it were endowed. On this point, however, Theresa was firm, feeling that if she once began to admit revenue

the people would not afterwards allow her to refuse it. So amid great opposition she at last took up her abode in the convent she had founded, and wanted for nothing, since alms, all unsolicited, poured in sufficient for all necessities; and the attention of the nuns was given to their duties without anxieties or obstruction, in all the dignity of voluntary poverty.

I look upon this reformation of the Carmelite order as very remarkable. The nuns did not go around among rich people supplicating their aid as was generally customary, for no convent or monastery was ever rich enough, in its own opinion. Still less did they say to rich people, "Ye are the lords and masters of mankind. We recognize your greatness and your power. Deign to give us from your abundance, not that we may live comfortably when serving the Lord, but live in luxury like you, and compete with you in the sumptuousness of our banquets and in the costliness of our furniture and our works of art, and be your companions and equals in social distinctions, and be enrolled with you as leaders of society." On the contrary they said, "We ask nothing from you. We do not wish to be rich. We prefer poverty. We would not be encumbered with useless impediments — too much camp equipage — while marching to do battle with the forces of the Devil. Christ is our Captain. He can take care of his own troops. He will not let us starve. And if

we do suffer, what of that? He suffered for our sake, shall we not suffer for his cause?"

The Convent of St. Joseph was founded in 1562, after Theresa had passed twenty-nine years in the Convent of the Incarnation. She died, 1582, at the age of sixty-seven, after twenty years of successful labors in the convent she had founded; revered by everybody; the friend of some of the most eminent men in Spain, including the celebrated Borgia, ex-Duke of Candia, and General of the Jesuits, who took the same interest in Theresa that Fénelon did in Madame Guyon. She lived to see established sixteen convents of nuns, all obeying her reformed rule, and most of them founded by her amid great difficulties and opposition. When she founded the Carmelite Convent of Toledo she had only four ducats to begin with. Some one objected to the smallness of the sum, when she replied, "Theresa and this money are indeed nothing; but God and Theresa and four ducats can accomplish anything." It was amid the fatigues incident to the founding a convent in Burgos that she sickened and died.

It was not, however, merely from her labors as a reformer and nun that Saint Theresa won her fame, but also for her writngs, which blaze with genius, although chiefly confined to her own religious experience. These consist of an account of her own life, and various letters and mystic treatises, some description of her spiritual

conflicts and ecstasies, others giving accounts of her religious labors in the founding of reformed orders and convents; while the most famous is a rapt portrayal of the progress of the soul to the highest heaven. Her own Memoirs remind one of the "Confessions of Saint Augustine," and of the "Imitation of Christ," by Thomas à Kempis. People do not read such books in these times to any extent, at least in this country, but they have ever been highly valued on the continent of Europe. The biographers of Saint Theresa have been numerous, some of them very distinguished, like Ribera, Yepez, and Sainte Marie. Bossuet, while he condemned Madame Guyon for the same mystical piety which marked Saint Theresa, still bowed down to the authority of the writings of the saint, while Fleury quotes them with the decrees of the Council of Trent.

But Saint Theresa ever was submissive to the authority of the Pope and of her spiritual directors. She would not have been canonized by Gregory XV. had she not been. So long as priests and nuns have been submissive to the authority of the Church, the Church has been lenient to their opinions. Until the Reformation, there was great practical freedom of opinion in the Catholic Church. Nor was the Church of the sixteenth century able to see the logical tendency of the mysticism of Saint Theresa, since it was not coupled with rebellion against spiritual despotism. It was not

until the logical and dogmatic intellect of Bossuet discerned the spiritual independence of the Jansenists and Quietists, that persecution began against them. Had Saint Theresa lived a century later, she would probably have shared the fate of Madame Guyon, whom she resembled more closely than any other woman that I have read of,—in her social position, in her practical intellect, despite the visions of a dreamy piety, in her passionate love of the Saviour, in her method of prayer, in her spiritual conflicts, in the benevolence which marked all her relations with the world, in the divine charity which breathed through all her words, and in the triumph of love over all the fears inspired by a gloomy theology and a superstitious priesthood. Both of these eminent women were poets of no ordinary merit; both enjoyed the friendship of the most eminent men of their age; both craved the society of the learned; both were of high birth and beautiful in their youth, and fitted to adorn society by their brilliant talk as well as graceful manners; both were amiable and sought to please, and loved distinction and appreciation; both were Catholics, yet permeated with the spirit of Protestantism, so far as religion is made a matter between God and the individual soul, and marked by internal communion with the Deity rather than by outward acts of prescribed forms; both had confessors, and yet both maintained the freedom of their minds and souls, and

knew of no binding authority but that divine voice which appealed to their conscience and heart, and that divine word which is written in the Scriptures. After the love of God had subdued their hearts, we read but little of penances, or self-expiations, or forms of worship, or church ceremonies, or priestly rigors, or any of the slaveries and formalities which bound ordinary people. Their piety was mystical, sometimes visionary, and not always intelligible, but deep, sincere, and lofty. Of the two women, I think Saint Theresa was the more remarkable, and had the most originality. Madame Guyon seems to have borrowed much from her, especially in her methods of prayer.

The influence of Saint Theresa's life and writings has been eminent and marked, not only in the Catholic but in the Protestant Church. If not direct, it has been indirect. She had that active, ardent nature which sets at defiance a formal piety, and became an example to noble women in a more enlightened, if less poetic, age. She was the precursor of a Madame de Chantal, of a Francis de Sales, of a Mère Angelique. The learned and saintly Port Royalists, in many respects, were her disciples. We even see a resemblance to her spiritual exercises in the "Thoughts" of Pascal. We see her mystical love of the Saviour in the poetry of Cowper and Watts and Wesley. The same sentiments she uttered appear even in the devotional works of Jeremy

Taylor and Jonathan Edwards. The Protestant theology of the last century was in harmony with hers in its essential features. In the "Pilgrim's Progress" of Bunyan we have no more graphic pictures of the sense of sin, the justice of its punishment, and the power by which it is broken, than are to be found in the writings of this saintly woman. In no Protestant hymnals do we find a warmer desire for a spiritual union with the Author of our salvation; in none do we see the aspiring soul seeking to climb to the regions of eternal love more than in her exultant melodies.

> "For uncreated charms I burn,
> Oppressed by slavish fears no more;
> For *One* in whom I may discern,
> E'en when He frowns, a sweetness I adore."

That remarkable work of Fénelon in which he defends Madame Guyon, called "Maxims of the Saints," would equally apply to Saint Theresa, in fact to all those who have been distinguished for an inward life, from Saint Augustine to Richard Baxter, — for unselfish love, resignation to the divine will, self-renunciation, meditation too deep for words, and union with Christ, as represented by the figure of the bride and bridegroom. This is Christianity, as it has appeared in all ages, both among Catholic and Protestant saints. It may seem to some visionary, to others unreasonable, and to others again repulsive. But this has been the life

and joy of those whom the Church has honored and commended. It has raised them above the despair of Paganism and the superstitions of the Middle Ages. It is the love which casteth out fear, producing in the harassed soul repose and rest amid the doubts and disappointments of life. It is not inspired by duty; it does not rest on philanthropy; it is not the religion of humanity. It is a gift bestowed by the Father of Lights, and will be, to remotest ages, the most precious boon which He bestows on those who seek His guidance.

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MADAME DE MAINTENON.

A. D. 1635–1719.

THE POLITICAL WOMAN.

MADAME DE MAINTENON.

THE POLITICAL WOMAN.

I PRESENT Madame de Maintenon as one of those great women who have exerted a powerful influence on the political destinies of a nation, since she was the life of the French monarchy for more than thirty years during the reign of Louis XIV. In the earlier part of her career she was a queen of society; but her social triumphs pale before the lustre of that power which she exercised as the wife of the greatest monarch of the age, — so far as splendor and magnificence can make a monarch great. No woman in modern times ever rose so high from a humble position, with the exception of Catherine I., wife of Peter the Great. She was not born a duchess, like some of those brilliant women who shed glory around the absolute throne of the proudest monarch of his century, but rose to her magnificent position by pure merit, — her graces, her virtues, and her abilities having won the respect and admiration of the overlauded but sagacious King of France. And

yet she was well born, so far as blood is concerned, since the Protestant family of D'Aubigné — to which she belonged — was one of the oldest in the kingdom. Her father, however, was a man of reckless extravagance and infamous habits, and committed follies and crimes which caused him to be imprisoned in Bordeaux. While in prison he compromised the character of the daughter of his jailer, and by her means escaped to America. He returned, and was again arrested. His wife followed him to his cell; and it was in this cell that the subject of this lecture was born (1635). Subsequently her miserable father obtained his release, sailed with his family to Martinique, and died there in extreme poverty. His wife, heart-broken, returned to France, and got her living by her needle, until she too, worn out by poverty and misfortune, died, leaving her daughter to strive, as she had striven, with a cold and heartless world.

This daughter became at first a humble dependent on one of her rich relatives; and "the future wife of Louis XIV. could be seen on a morning assisting the coachmen to groom the horses, or following a flock of turkeys, with her breakfast in a basket." But she was beautiful and bright, and panted, like most ambitious girls, for an entrance into what is called "society." Society at that time in France was brilliant, intellectual, and wicked. "There was the blending

of calculating interest and religious asceticism," when women of the world, after having exhausted its pleasures, retired to cloisters, and "sacrificed their natural affections to family pride." It was an age of intellectual idlers, when men and women, having nothing to do, spent their time in *salons*, and learned the art of conversation, which was followed by the art of letter-writing.

To reach the *salons* of semi-literary and semi-fashionable people, where rank and wealth were balanced by wit, became the desire of the young Mademoiselle d'Aubigné. Her entrance into society was effected in a curious way. At that time there lived in Paris (about the year 1650) a man whose house was the centre of gay and literary people, — those who did not like the stiffness of the court or the pedantries of the Hôtel de Rambouillet. His name was Scarron, — a popular and ribald poet, a comic dramatist, a buffoon, a sort of Rabelais, whose inexhaustible wit was the admiration of the city. He belonged to a good family, and originally was a man of means. His uncle had been a bishop and his father a member of the Parliament of Paris. But he had wasted his substance in riotous living, and was reduced to a small pension from the Government. His well-to-do father educated him for the Church, and he continued through life to wear the ecclesiastical garb. He was full of maladies and miseries, and

his only relief was in society. In spite of his poverty he contrived to give suppers — they would now be called dinners — which were exceedingly attractive. To his house came the noted characters of the day, — Mademoiselle de Scudéry the novelist, Marigny the song-writer, Hénault the translator of Lucretius, De Grammont the pet of the court, Chatillon, the duchesses de la Salière and De Sévigné, even Ninon de L'Enclos; all bright and fashionable people, whose wit and raillery were the admiration of the city.

It so happened that to a reception of the Abbé Scarron was brought one day the young lady destined to play so important a part in the history of her country. But her dress was too short, which so mortified her in the splendid circle to which she was introduced that she burst into tears, and Scarron was obliged to exert all his tact to comfort her. Yet she made a good impression, since she was beautiful and witty; and a letter which she wrote to a friend soon after, which letter Scarron happened to see, was so remarkable, that the crippled dramatist determined to make her his wife, — she only sixteen, he forty-two; so infirm that he could not walk, and so poor that the guests frequently furnished the dishes for the common entertainments. And with all these physical defects (for his body was bent nearly double), and notwithstanding that he was one of the coarsest and profanest

men of that ungodly age, she accepted him. What price will not an aspiring woman pay for social position! — for even a marriage with Scarron was to her a step in the ladder of social elevation.

Did she love this bloated and crippled sensualist, or was she carried away by admiration of his brilliant conversation, or was she actuated by a far-reaching policy? Unquestionably she was dominated by ambition, believing in the principle that the end justifies the means. Nor is such belief incompatible with pleasing manners, amiability of temper, and great intellectual radiance; it equally marked, I can fancy, Jezebel, Cleopatra, and Catherine de, Médicis. Moreover, in France it has long been the custom for poor girls to seek eligible matches without reference to love.

It does not seem that this hideous marriage provoked scandal. In fact, it made the fortune of Mademoiselle d'Aubigné. She now presided at entertainments which were the gossip of the city, and to which stupid dukes aspired in vain; for Scarron would never have a dull man at his table, not even if he were loaded with diamonds and could trace his pedigree to the paladins of Charlemagne. But by presiding at parties made up of the *élite* of the fashionable and cultivated society of Paris, this ambitious woman became acquainted with those who had influence at court; so that when her husband died, and she was cut off

from his life-pension and reduced to poverty, she was recommended to Madame de Montespan, the King's mistress, as the governess of her children. It was a judicious appointment. Madame Scarron was then thirty-four, in the pride of womanly grace and dignity, with rare intellectual gifts and accomplishments. There is no education more effective than that acquired by constant intercourse with learned and witty people. Even the dinner-table is no bad school for one naturally bright and amiable. There is more to be learned from conversation than from books. The living voice is a great educator.

Madame Scarron, on the death of her husband, was already a queen of society. As the governess of Montespan's children, — which was a great position, since it introduced her to the notice of the King himself, the fountain of all honor and promotion, — her habits of life were somewhat changed. Life became more sombre by the irksome duties of educating unruly children, and the forced retirement to which she was necessarily subjected. She could have lived without this preferment, since the pension of her husband was restored to her, and could have made her *salon* the resort of the best society. But she had deeper designs. Not to be the queen of a fashionable circle did she now aspire, but to be the leader of a court.

But this aim she was obliged to hide. It could only

be compassed by transcendent tact, prudence, patience, and good sense, all of which qualities she possessed in an eminent degree. It was necessary to gain the confidence of an imperious and jealous mistress — which was only to be done by the most humble assiduities — before she could undermine her in the affections of the King. She had also to gain his respect and admiration without allowing any improper intimacy. She had to disarm jealousy and win confidence; to be as humble in address as she was elegant in manners, and win a selfish man from pleasure by the richness of her conversation and the severity of her own morals.

Little by little she began to exercise a great influence over the mind of the King when he was becoming wearied of the railleries of his exacting favorite, and when some of the delusions of life were beginning to be dispelled. He then found great solace and enjoyment in the society of Madame Scarron, whom he enriched, enabling her to purchase the estate of Maintenon and to assume its name. She soothed his temper, softened his resentments, and directed his attention to a new field of thought and reflection. She was just the opposite of Montespan in almost everything. The former won by the solid attainments of the mind; the latter by her sensual charms. The one talked on literature, art, and religious subjects; the other on fêtes, balls, reviews, and the glories of the court and

its innumerable scandals. Maintenon reminded the King of his duties without sermonizing or moralizing, but with the insidious flattery of a devout worshipper of his genius and power; Montespan directed his mind to pleasures which had lost their charm. Maintenon was always amiable and sympathetic; Montespan provoked the King by her resentments, her imperious exactions, her ungovernable fits of temper, her haughty sarcasm. Maintenon was calm, modest, self-possessed, judicious, wise; Montespan was passionate, extravagant, unreasonable. Maintenon always appealed to the higher nature of the King; Montespan to the lower. The one was a sincere friend, dissuading from folly; the other an exacting lover, demanding perpetually new favors, to the injury of the kingdom and the subversion of the King's dignity of character. The former ruled through the reason; the latter through the passions. Maintenon was irreproachable in her morals, preserved her self-respect, and tolerated no improper advances, having no great temptations to subdue, steadily adhering to that policy which she knew would in time make her society indispensable; Montespan was content to be simply mistress, with no forecast of the future, and with but little regard to the interests or honor of her lord. Maintenon became more attractive every day from the variety of her intellectual gifts and her unwearied efforts to please and

instruct; Montespan, although a bright woman, amidst the glories of a dazzling court, at last wearied, disgusted and repelled. And yet the woman who gradually supplanted Madame de Montespan by superior radiance of mind and soul openly remained her friend, through all her waning influence, and pretended to come to her rescue.

The friendship of the King for Madame de Maintenon began as early as 1672; and during the twelve years she was the governess of Montespan's children she remained discreet and dignified. "I dismiss him," said she, "always despairing, never repulsed." What a transcendent actress! What astonishing tact! What shrewdness blended with self-control! She conformed herself to his tastes and notions. At the supper-tables of her palsied husband she had been gay, unstilted, and simple; but with the King she became formal, prudish, ceremonious, fond of etiquette, and pharisaical in her religious life. She discreetly ruled her royal lover in the name of virtue and piety. In 1675 the King created her Marquise de Maintenon.

On the disgrace of Madame de Montespan, when the King was forty-six, Madame de Maintenon still remained at court, having a conspicuous office in the royal household as mistress of the robes to the Dauphiness, so that her nearness to the King created no scandal. She was now a stately woman, with

sparkling black eyes, a fine complexion, beautiful teeth, and exceedingly graceful manners. The King could not now live without her, for he needed a counsellor whom he could trust. It must be borne in mind that the great Colbert, on whose shoulders had been laid the burdens of the monarchy, had recently died. On the death of the Queen (1685), Louis made Madame de Maintenon his wife, she being about fifty and he forty-seven.

This private and secret marriage was never openly divulged during the life of the King, although generally surmised. This placed Madame de Maintenon — for she went by this title — in a false position. To say the least, it was humiliating amid all the splendors to which she was raised; for if she were a lawful wife, she was not a queen. Some, perhaps, supposed she was in the position of those favorites whose fate, again and again, has been to fall.

One thing is certain, — the King would have made her his mistress years before; but to this she would never consent. She was too politic, too ambitious, too discreet, to make that immense mistake. Yet after the dismissal of Montespan she seemed to be such, until she had with transcendent art and tact attained her end. It is a flaw in her character that she was willing so long to be aspersed; showing that power was dearer to her than reputation. Bossuet, when consulted by

the King as to his intended marriage, approved of it only on the ground that it was better to make a foolish marriage than violate the seventh commandment. La Chaise, the Jesuit confessor, who travelled in a coach and six, recommended it, because Madame de Maintenon was his tool. But Louvois felt the impropriety as well as Fénelon, and advised the King not thus to commit himself. The Dauphin was furious. The Archbishop of Paris simply did his duty in performing the ceremony.

Doubtless reasons of State imperatively demanded that the marriage should not openly be proclaimed, and still more that the widow of Scarron should not be made the Queen of France. Louis was too much of a politician, and too proud a man, to make this concession. Had he raised his unacknowledged wife to the throne, it would have resulted in political complications which would have embarrassed his whole subsequent reign. He dared not do this. He could not thus scandalize all Europe, and defy all the precedents of France. And no one knew this better than Madame de Maintenon herself. She appeared to be satisfied if she could henceforth live in virtuous relations. Her religious scruples are to be respected. It is wonderful that she gained as much as she did in that proud, cynical, and worldly court, and from the proudest monarch in the world. But Louis was not happy

without her, — a proof of his respect and love. At the age of forty-seven he needed the counsels of a wife amid his increasing embarrassments. He was already wearied, sickened, and disgusted: he now wanted repose, friendship, and fidelity. He certainly was guilty of no error in marrying one of the most gifted women of his kingdom, — perhaps the most accomplished woman of the age, interesting and even beautiful at fifty. She was then in the perfection of mental and moral fascinations. He made no other sacrifice than of his pride. His fidelity to his wife, and his constant devotion to her until he died, proved the sincerity and depth of his attachment; and her marvellous influence over him was on the whole good, with the exception of her religious intolerance.

As the wife of Louis XIV. the power of Madame de Maintenon became almost unbounded. Her ambition was gratified, and her end was accomplished. She was the dispenser of court favors, the arbiter of fortunes, the real ruler of the land. Her reign was political as well as social. She sat in the cabinet of the King, and gave her opinions on State matters whenever she was asked. Her counsels were so wise that they generally prevailed. No woman before or after her ever exerted so great an influence on the fortunes of a kingdom as did the widow of the poet Scarron. The court which she adorned and ruled was not so brilliant

as it had been under Madame de Montespan, but was still magnificent. She made it more decorous, though probably more dull. She was opposed to all foolish expenditures. She discouraged the endless fêtes and balls and masquerades which made her predecessor so popular. But still Versailles glittered with unparalleled wonders: the fountains played; grand equipages crowded the park; the courtiers blazed in jewels and velvets and satins; the salons were filled with all who were illustrious in France; princes, nobles, ambassadors, generals, statesmen, and ministers rivalled one another in the gorgeousness of their dresses; women of rank and beauty displayed their graces in the Salon de Venus.

The articles of luxury and taste that were collected in the countless rooms of that vast palace almost exceeded belief. And all these blazing rooms were filled, even to the attic, with aristocratic servitors, who poured out perpetual incense to the object of their united idolatry, who sat on almost an Olympian throne. Never was a monarch served by such idolaters. "Bossuet and Fénelon taught his children; Bourdaloue and Massillon adorned his chapel; La Chaise and Le Tellier directed his conscience; Boileau and Molière sharpened his wit; La Rochefoucauld cultivated his taste; La Fontaine wrote his epigrams; Racine chronicled his wars; De Turenne commanded his armies;

Fouquet and Colbert arranged his finances; Molé and D'Aguesseau pronounced his judgments; Louvois laid out his campaigns; Vauban fortified his citadels; Riquet dug his canals; Mansard constructed his palaces; Poussin decorated his chambers; Le Brun painted his ceilings; Le Notre laid out his grounds; Girardon sculptured his fountains; Montespan arranged his fêtes; while La Vallière, La Fayette, and Sévigné — all queens of beauty — displayed their graces in the Salon de Venus." What an array of great men and brilliant women to reflect the splendors of an absolute throne! Never was there such an *éclat* about a court; it was one of the wonders of the age.

And Louis never lost his taste for this outward grandeur. He was ceremonious and exacting to the end. He never lost the sense of his own omnipotence. In his latter days he was sad and dejected, but never exhibited his weakness among his worshippers. He was always dignified and self-possessed. He loved pomp as much as Michael Angelo loved art. Even in his bitterest reverses he still maintained the air of the "Grand Monarque." Says Henri Martin: —

"Etiquette, without accepting the extravagant restraints which the court of France endured, and which French genius would not support, assumed an unknown extension, proportioned to the increase of royal splendor. It was adapted to serve the monarchy at the expense of the aristoc-

racy, and tended to make functions prevail over birth. The great dukes and peers were multiplied in order to reduce their importance, and the King gave the marshals precedence over them. The court was a scientific and complicated machine which Louis guided with sovereign skill. At all hours, in all places, in the most trifling circumstances of life, he was always king. His affability never contradicted itself; he expressed interest and kindliness to all; he showed himself indulgent to errors that could not be repaired; his majesty was tempered by a grave familiarity; and he wholly refrained from those pointed and ironical speeches which so cruelly wound when falling from the lips of a man that none can answer. He taught all, by his example, the most exquisite courtesy to women. Manners acquired unequalled elegance. The fêtes exceeded everything which romance had dreamed, in which the fairy splendors that wearied the eye were blended with the noblest pleasures of the intellect But whether appearing in mythological ballets, or riding in tournaments in the armor of the heroes of antiquity, or presiding at plays and banquets in his ordinary apparel with his thick flowing hair, his loose surtout blazing with gold and silver, and his profusion of ribbons and plumes, always his air and port had something unique, — always he was the first among all. His whole life was like a work of art; and the rôle was admirably played, because he played it conscientiously."

The King was not only sacred, but he was supposed to have different blood in his veins from other men.

His person was inviolable. He reigned, it was universally supposed, by divine right. He was a divinely commissioned personage, like Saul and David. He did not reign because he was able or powerful or wealthy, because he was a statesman or a general, but because he had a right to reign which no one disputed. This adoration of royalty was not only universal, but it was deeply seated in the minds of men, and marked strongly all the courtiers and generals and bishops and poets who surrounded the throne of Louis, — Bossuet and Fénelon, as well as Colbert and Louvois; Racine and Molière, as well as Condé and Turenne. Especially the nobility of the realm looked up to the king as the source and centre of their own honors and privileges. Even the people were proud to recognize in him a sort of divinity, and all persons stood awe-struck in the presence of royalty. All this reverence was based on ideas which have ever moved the world, — such as sustained popes in the Middle Ages, and emperors in ancient Rome, and patriarchal rule among early Oriental peoples. Religion, as well as law and patriotism, invested monarchs with this sacred and inalienable authority, never greater than when Louis XIV. began to reign.

But with all his grandeur Louis XIV. did not know how to avail himself of the advantages which fortune and accident placed in his way. He was simply mag-

nificent, like Xerxes, — like a man who had entered into a vast inheritance which he did not know what to do with. He had no profound views of statesmanship, like Augustus or Tiberius. He had no conception of what the true greatness of a country consisted in. Hence his vast treasures were spent in useless wars, silly pomps, and inglorious pleasures. His grand court became the scene of cabals and rivalries, scandals and follies. His wars, from which he expected glory, ended only in shame; his great generals passed away without any to take their place; his people, instead of being enriched by a development of national resources, became poor and discontented; while his persecutions decimated his subjects and sowed the seeds of future calamities. Even the learned men who shed lustre around his throne prostituted their talents to nurse his egotism, and did but little to elevate the national character. Neither Pascal with his intense hostility to spiritual despotism, nor Racine with the severe taste which marked the classic authors of Greece and Rome, nor Fénelon with his patriotic enthusiasm and clear perception of the moral strength of empires, dared to give full scope to his genius, but all were obliged to veil their sentiments in vague panegyrics of ancient heroes. At the close of the seventeenth century the great intellectual lights had disappeared under the withering influences of despotism, — as in ancient Rome under

the emperors all manly independence had fled, — and literature went through an eclipse. That absorbing egotism which made Louis XIV. jealous of the fame of Condé and Luxembourg, or fearful of the talents of Louvois and Colbert, or suspicious of the influence of Racine and Fénelon, also led him to degrade his nobility by menial offices, and institute in his court a burdensome formality.

In spite of his great abilities, no monarch ever reaped a severer penalty for his misgovernment than did Louis. Like Solomon, he lived long enough to see the bursting of all the bubbles which had floated before his intoxicated brain. All his delusions were dispelled; he was oppressed with superstitious fears; he was weary of the very pleasures of which he once was fondest; he saw before him a gulf of national disasters; he was obliged to melt up the medallions which commemorated his victories, to furnish bread for starving soldiers; he lost the provinces he had seized; he saw the successive defeat of all his marshals and the annihilation of his veteran armies; he was deprived of his children and grandchildren by the most dreadful malady known to that generation; a feeble infant was the heir of his dominions; he saw nothing before him but national disgrace; he found no counsellors whom he could trust, no friends to whom he could pour out his sorrows; the infirmities of age oppressed his body; the agonies of remorse dis-

turbed his soul; the fear of hell became the foundation of his religion, for he must have felt that he had a fearful reckoning with the King of kings.

Such was the man to whom the best days of Madame de Maintenon were devoted; and she shared his confidence to the last. She did all she could to alleviate his sorrows, for a more miserable man than Louis XIV. during the last twenty years of his life never was seated on a throne. Well might his wife exclaim, "Save those who occupy the highest places, I know of none more unhappy than those who envy them." This great woman attempted to make her husband a religious man, and succeeded so far as a rigid regard to formalities and technical observances can make a man religious.

It may be asked how this formal and proper woman was enabled to exert upon the King so great an influence; for she was the real ruler of the land. No woman ever ruled with more absolute sway, from Queen Esther to Madame de Pompadour, than did the widow of the profane and crippled Scarron. It cannot be doubted that she exerted this influence by mere moral and intellectual force.— the power of physical beauty retreating before the superior radiance of wisdom and virtue. La Vallière had wearied and Montespan had disgusted even a sensual king, with all their remarkable attractions: but Maintenon, by her prudence, her tact, her

wisdom, and her friendship, retained the empire she had won, — thus teaching the immortal lesson that nothing but respect constitutes a sure foundation for love, or can hold the heart of a selfish man amid the changes of life. Whatever the promises made emphatic by passion, whatever the presents or favors given as tokens of everlasting ties, whatever the raptures consecrating the endearments of a plighted troth, whatever the admiration called out by the scintillations of genius, whatever the gratitude arising from benefits bestowed in sympathy, all will vanish in the heart of a man unless confirmed by qualities which extort esteem, — the most impressive truth that can be presented to the mind of woman; her encouragement if good, her sentence to misery if bad, so far as her hopes centre around an earthly idol.

Now, Madame de Maintenon, whatever her defects, her pharisaism, her cunning, her ambition, and her narrow religious intolerance, was still, it would seem, always respected, not only by the King himself, — a great discerner of character, — but by the court which she controlled, and even by that gay circle of wits who met around the supper-tables of her first husband. The breath of scandal never tarnished her reputation; she was admired by priests as well as by nobles. From this fact, which is well attested, we infer that she acted with transcendent discretion as the governess of the

Duke of Maine, even when brought into the most intimate relations with the King; and that when reigning at the court after the death of the Queen, she must have been supposed to have a right to all the attentions which she received from Louis XIV. And what is very remarkable about this woman is, that she should so easily have supplanted Madame de Montespan in the full blaze of her dazzling beauty, when the King was in the maturity of his power and in all the pride of external circumstance,—she, born a Protestant, converted to Catholicism in her youth under protest, poor, dependent, a governess, the widow of a vulgar buffoon, and with antecedents which must have stung to the quick so proud a man as was Louis XIV. With his severe taste, his experience, his discernment, with all the cynical and hostile influences of a proud and worldly court, and after a long and searching intimacy, it is hard to believe that he could have loved and honored her to his death if she had not been worthy of his esteem. And when we remember that for nearly forty years she escaped the scandals which made those times unique in infamy, we are forced to concede that on the whole she must have been a good woman. To retain such unbounded power for over thirty years is a very remarkable thing to do.

Madame de Maintenon, however, though wise and virtuous, made many grave mistakes, as she had many

defects of character. Great as she was, she has to answer for political crimes into which, from her narrow religious prejudices, she led the King.

The most noticeable feature in the influence which Madame de Maintenon exercised on the King was in inciting a spirit of religious intolerance. And this appeared even long before Madame de Montespan had lost her ascendency. For ten years before the revocation of the Edict of Nantes there had been continual persecution of the Protestants in France, on the ground that they were heretics, though not rebels. And the same persecuting spirit was displayed in reference to the Jansenists, who were Catholics, and whose only sin was intellectual boldness. Anybody who thought differently from the monarch incurred the royal displeasure. Intellectual freedom and honesty were the real reasons of the disgrace of Racine and Fénelon. For the King was a bigot in religion as well as a despot on a throne. He fancied that he was very pious. He was regular in all his religious duties. He was an earnest and conscientious adherent to all the doctrines of the Catholic Church. In his judgment, a departure from those doctrines should be severely punished. He was as sincere as Torquemada, or Alva, or Saint Dominic. His wife encouraged this bigotry, and even stimulated his resentments toward those who differed from him.

At last, in 1685, the fatal blow was struck which decimated the subjects of an irresponsible king. The glorious edict which Henry IV. had granted, and which even Richelieu and Mazarin had respected, was repealed. There was no political necessity for the crime. It sprang from unalloyed religious intolerance; and it was as suicidal as it was uncalled for and cruel. It was an immense political blunder, which no enlightened monarch would ever have committed, and which none but a cold and narrow woman would ever have encouraged. There was no excuse or palliation for this abominable persecution any more than there was for the burning of John Huss. It had not even as much to justify it as had the slaughter of St. Bartholomew, for the Huguenots were politically hostile and dangerous. It was an act of wanton cruelty incited by religious bigotry. I wonder how a woman so kind-hearted, so intelligent, and so politic as Madame de Maintenon doubtless was, could have encouraged the King to a measure which undermined his popularity, which cut the sinews of natural strength, and raised up implacable enemies in every Protestant country. I can palliate her detestable bigotry only on the ground that she was the slave of an order of men who have ever proved themselves to be the inveterate foes of human freedom, and who marked their footsteps, wherever they went, by a trail of blood. Louis was equally their blinded tool

The Order — the "Society of Jesus" — was created to extirpate heresy, and in this instance it was carried out to the bitter end. The persecution of the Protestants under Louis XIV. was the most cruel and successful of all known persecutions in ancient or modern times. It annihilated the Protestants, so far as there were any left openly to defend their cause. It drove out of France from two hundred thousand to four hundred thousand of her best people, and executed or confined to the galleys as many more. They died like sheep led to the slaughter; they died not with arms, but Bibles, in their hands. I have already presented some details of that inglorious persecution in my lecture on Louis XIV., and will not repeat what I there said. It was deemed by Madame de Maintenon a means of grace to the King, — for in her way she always sought his conversion. And when the bloody edict went forth for the slaughter of the best people in the land, she wrote that "the King was now beginning to think seriously of his salvation. If God preserve him, there will be no longer but one religion in the kingdom." This foul stain on her character did not proceed from cruelty of disposition, but from mistaken zeal. What a contrast her conduct was to the policy of Elizabeth! Yet she was no worse than Le Tellier, La Chaise, and other fanatics. Religious intolerance was one of the features of the age and of the Roman Catholic Church.

But religious bigotry is eternally odious to enlightened reason. No matter how interesting a man or woman may be in most respects, if stained with cruel intolerance in religious opinions, he or she will be repulsive. It left an indelible stain on the character of the most brilliant and gifted woman of her times, and makes us forget her many virtues. With all her excellences, she goes down in history as a cold and intolerant woman whom we cannot love. We cannot forget that in a great degree through her influence the Edict of Nantes was repealed.

The persecution of the Protestants, however, partially reveals the narrow intolerance of Madame de Maintenon. She sided but with those whose influence was directed to the support of the recognized dogmas of the Church in their connection with the absolute rule of kings. The interests of Catholic institutions have ever been identical with absolutism. Bossuet, the ablest theologian and churchman which the Catholic Church produced in the seventeenth century, gave the whole force of his vast intellect to uphold an unlimited royal authority. He saw in the bold philosophical speculations of Descartes, Malebranche, Spinoza, Leibnitz, and Locke an insidious undermining of the doctrines of the Church, an intellectual freedom whose logical result would be fatal alike to Church and State. His eagle eye penetrated to the core of every system of human

thought. He saw the logical and necessary results of every theory which Pantheists, or Rationalists, or Quietists, or Jansenists advanced. Whatever did not support the dogmas of mediæval and patriotic theologians, such as the Papal Church indorsed, was regarded by him with suspicion and aversion. Every theory or speculation which tended to emancipate the mind, or weaken the authority of the Church, or undermine an absolute throne, was treated by him with dogmatic intolerance and persistent hatred. He made war alike on the philosophers, the Jansenists, and the Quietists, whether they remained in the ranks of the Church or not. It was the dangerous consequences of these speculations pushed to their logical result which he feared and detested, and which no other eye than his was able to perceive.

Bossuet communicated his spirit to Madame de Maintenon and to the King, who were both under his influence as to the treatment of religious or philosophical questions. Louis and his wife were both devout supporters of orthodoxy, — that is, the received doctrines of the Church, — partly from conservative tendencies, and partly from the connection of established religious institutions with absolutism in government. Whatever was established, was supported because it was established. They would suffer no innovation, not even in philosophy. Anything progressive was

abhorred as much as anything destructive. When Fénelon said, "I love my family better than myself, my country better than my family, and the human race better than my country," he gave utterance to a sentiment which was revolutionary in its tendency. When he declared in his "Télémaque" what were the duties of kings, — that they reigned for the benefit of their subjects rather than for themselves, — he undermined the throne which he openly supported. It was the liberal spirit which animated Fénelon, as well as the innovations to which his opinions logically led, which arrayed against him the king who admired him, the woman who had supported him, and the bishop who was jealous of him. Although he charmed everybody with whom he associated by the angelic sweetness of his disposition, his refined courtesies of manner, and his sparkling but inoffensive wit, — a born courtier as well as philosopher, the most interesting and accomplished man of his generation, — still, neither Bossuet nor Madame de Maintenon nor the King could tolerate his teachings, so pregnant were they with innovations; and he was exiled to his bishopric. Madame de Maintenon, who once delighted in Fénelon, learned to detest him as much as Bossuet did, when the logical tendency of his writings was seen. She would rivet the chains of slavery on the human intellect as well as on the devotees of Rome or the courtiers of the King; while

Fénelon would have emancipated the race itself in the fervor and sincerity of his boundless love.

This hostility to Fénelon was not caused entirely by the political improvements he would have introduced, but because his all-embracing toleration sought to protect the sentimental pantheism which Madame Guyon inculcated in her maxims of disinterested love and voluntary passivity of the soul towards God, in opposition to that rationalistic pantheism which Spinoza defended, and into which he had inexorably pushed with unexampled logic the deductions of Malebranche. The men who finally overturned the fabric of despotism which Richelieu constructed were the philosophers. The clear but narrow intellect of the King and his wife instinctively saw in them the natural enemies of the throne; and hence they were frowned upon, if not openly persecuted.

We are forced therefore to admit that the intolerance of Madame de Maintenon, repulsive as it was, arose in part, like the intolerance of Bossuet, from zeal to uphold the institutions and opinions on which the Church and the throne were equally based. The Jesuits would call such a woman a nursing mother of the Church, a protector of the cause of orthodoxy, the watchful guardian of the royal interests and those of all established institutions. Any ultra-conservatism, logically carried out, would land any person on the ground where she stood.

But while Madame de Maintenon was a foe to everything like heresy, or opposition to the Catholic Church, or true intellectual freedom, she was the friend of education. She was the founder of the celebrated School of St. Cyr, where three hundred young ladies, daughters of impoverished nobles, were educated gratuitously. She ever took the greatest interest in this school, and devoted to it all the time her numerous engagements would permit. She visited it every day, and was really its president and director. There was never a better school for aristocratic girls in a Catholic country. She directed their studies and superintended their manners, and brought to bear on their culture her own vast experience. If Bossuet was a born priest, she was a born teacher. It was for the amusement of the girls that Racine was induced by her to write one of his best dramas, — "Queen Esther," a sort of religious tragedy in the severest taste, which was performed by the girls in the presence of the most distinguished people of the court.

Madame de Maintenon exerted her vast influence in favor of morality and learning. She rewarded genius and scholarship. She was the patron of those distinguished men who rendered important services to France, whether statesmen, divines, generals, or scholars. She sought to bring to the royal notice eminent merit in every department of life within the ranks of ortho-

doxy. A poet, or painter, or orator, who gave remarkable promise, was sure of her kindness; and there were many such. For the world is full at all times of remarkable young men and women, but there are very few remarkable men at the age of fifty.

And her influence on the court was equally good. She discouraged levities, gossip, and dissipation. If the palace was not so gay as during the reign of Madame de Montespan, it was more decorous and more intellectual. It became fashionable to go to church, and to praise good sermons and read books of casuistry. "Tartuffe grew pale before Escobar." Bossuet and Bourdaloue were equal oracles with Molière and Racine. Great preachers were all the fashion. The court became very decorous, if it was hypocritical. The King interested himself in theological discussions, and became as austere as formerly he was gay and merry. He regretted his wars and his palace-building; for both were discouraged by Madame de Maintenon, who perceived that they impoverished the nation. She undertook the mighty task of reforming the court itself, as well as the morals of the King; and she partially succeeded. The proud Nebuchadnezzar whom she served was at last made to confess that there was a God to whom he was personally responsible; and he was encouraged to bear with dignity those sad reverses which humiliated his pride, and drank without complaint the

dregs of that bitter cup which retributive justice held out in mercy before he died. It was his wife who revealed the deceitfulness, the hypocrisy, the treachery, and the heartlessness of that generation of vipers which he had trusted and enriched. She was more than the guardian of his interests; she was his faithful friend, who dissuaded him from follies. So that outwardly Louis XIV. became a religious man, and could perhaps have preached a sermon on the vanity of a worldly life, — that whatever is born in vanity must end in vanity.

It is greatly to the credit of Madame de Maintenon that she was interested in whatever tended to improve the morals of the people or to develop the intellect. She was one of those strong-minded women who are impressible by grand sentiments. She would have admired Madame de Staël or Madame Roland, — not their opinions, but their characters. Politics was perhaps the most interesting subject to her, as it has ever been to very cultivated women in France; and it was with the details of cabinets and military enterprises that she was most familiar. It was this political knowledge which made her so wise a counsellor and so necessary a companion to the King. But her reign was nevertheless a usurpation. She triumphed in consequence of the weakness of her husband more than by her own strength; and the nation never forgave

her. She outraged the honor of the King, and detracted from the dignity of the royal station. Louis XIV. certainly had the moral right to marry her, as a nobleman may espouse a servant-girl; but it was a *faux-pas* which the proud idolaters of rank could not excuse.

And for this usurpation Madame de Maintenon paid no inconsiderable a penalty. She was insulted by the royal family to the day of her death. The Dauphin would not visit her, even when the King led him to the door of her apartments. The courtiers mocked her behind her back. Her rivals thrust upon her their envenomed libels. Even Racine once so far forgot himself as to allude in her presence to the miserable farces of the poet Scarron, — an unpremeditated and careless insult which she never forgot or forgave. Moreover, in all her grandeur she was doomed to the most exhaustive formalities and duties; for the King exacted her constant services, which wearied and disgusted her. She was born for freedom, but was really a slave, although she wore gilded fetters. She was not what one would call an unhappy or disappointed woman, since she attained the end to which she had aspired. But she could not escape humiliations. She was in a false position. Her reputation was aspersed. She was only a wife whose marriage was concealed; she was not a queen. All she gained, she extorted.

In rising to the exalted height of ruling the court of France she yet abdicated her throne as an untrammelled queen of society, and became the slave of a pompous, ceremonious, self-conscious, egotistical, selfish, peevish, self-indulgent, tyrannical, exacting, priest-ridden, worn-out, disenchanted old voluptuary. And when he died she was treated as a usurper rather than a wife, and was obliged to leave the palace, where she would have been insulted, and take up her quarters in the convent she had founded. The King did not leave her by his will a large fortune, so that she was obliged to curtail her charities.

Madame de Maintenon lived to be eighty-four, and retained her intellectual faculties to the last, retiring to the Abbey of St. Cyr on the death of the King in 1715, and surviving him but four years. She was beloved and honored by those who knew her intimately. She was the idol of the girls of St. Cyr, who worshipped the ground on which she trod. Yet she made no mark in history after the death of Louis XIV. All her greatness was but the reflection of his glory. Her life, successful as it was, is but a confirmation of the folly of seeking a position which is not legitimate. No position is truly desirable which is a false one, which can be retained only by art, and which subjects one to humiliation and mortifications. I have great admiration for the many excellent qualities of this extraordinary

and gifted woman, although I know that she is not a favorite with historians. She is not endeared to the heart of the nation she indirectly ruled. She is positively disliked by a large class, not merely for her narrow religious intolerance, but even for the arts by which she gained so great an influence. Yet, liked or disliked, it would be difficult to find in French history a greater or more successful woman.

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SARAH, DUCHESS OF MARLBOROUGH

A. D. 1660–1744.

THE WOMAN OF THE WORLD.

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IN the career of Madame de Maintenon we have seen in a woman an inordinate ambition to rise in the world and control public affairs. In the history of the Duchess of Marlborough, we see the same ambition, the same love of power, the same unscrupulous adaptation of means to an end. Yet the aim and ends of these two remarkable political women were different. The Frenchwoman had in view the reform of a wicked court, the interests of education, the extirpation of heresy, the elevation of men of genius, the social and religious improvement of a great nation, as she viewed it, through a man who bore absolute sway. The Englishwoman connived at political corruptions, was indifferent to learning and genius, and exerted her great influence, not for the good of her country, but to advance the fortunes of her family. Madame de Maintenon, if narrow and intolerant, was unselfish, charitable, religious, and patriotic; the Duchess of

Marlborough was selfish, grasping, avaricious, and worldly in all her aspirations. Both were ambitious, — the one to benefit the country which she virtually ruled, and the other to accumulate honors and riches by cabals and intrigues in the court of a weak woman whom she served and despised. Madame de Maintenon, in a greater position, as the wife of the most powerful monarch in Christendom, was gentle, amiable, condescending, and kind-hearted; the Duchess of Marlborough was haughty, insolent, and acrimonious. Both were beautiful, bright, witty, and intellectual; but the Frenchwoman was immeasurably more cultivated, and was impressible by grand sentiments.

And yet the Duchess of Marlborough was a great woman. She was the most prominent figure in the Court of Queen Anne, and had a vast influence on the politics of her day. Her name is associated with great statesmen and generals. She occupied the highest social position of any woman in England after that of the royal family. She had the ear and the confidence of the Queen. The greatest offices were virtually at her disposal. Around her we may cluster the leading characters and events of the age of Queen Anne.

Sarah Jennings, the future Duchess of Marlborough, was born in 1660. She belonged to a good though not a noble family, which for many generations possessed

a good estate in Hertfordshire. Her grandfather, Sir John Jennings, was a zealous adherent to the royal cause before the Revolution, and received the Order of the Bath, in company with his patron, Charles I., then Prince of Wales. When Sarah was twelve years of age, she found a kind friend in the Duchess of York, Mary Beatrice Eleanora, Princess of Modena (an adopted daughter of Louis XIV.), who married James, brother of Charles II. The young girl was thus introduced to the dangerous circle which surrounded the Duke of York, and she passed her time, not in profitable studies, but in amusements and revels. She lived in the ducal household as a playmate of the Princess Anne, and was a beautiful, bright, and witty young lady, though not well educated. In the year 1673 she became acquainted with John Churchill, a colonel of the army and a gentleman of the bedchamber to the Duke of York, — the latter a post of honor, but of small emolument. He was at that time twenty-three years of age, a fine-looking and gallant soldier, who had already distinguished himself at the siege of Tangier. He had also fought under the banners of Marshal Turenne in the Low Countries, by whom he was called the "handsome Englishman." At the siege of Mæstricht he further advanced his fortunes, succeeding the famous Earl of Peterborough in the command of the English troops, then in alliance with Louis XIV. He was not

a man of intellectual culture, nor was he deeply read. It is said that even his spelling was bad; but his letters were clear and forcible. He made up his deficiency in education by irresistibly pleasing manners, remarkable energy, and a coolness of judgment that was seldom known to err.

His acquaintance with the beautiful Sarah Jennings soon ripened into love; but he was too poor to marry. Nor had she a fortune. They however became engaged to each other, and the betrothal continued three years. It was not till 1678 that the marriage took place. The colonel was domestic in his tastes and amiable in his temper, and his home was happy. He was always fond of his wife, although her temper was quick and her habits exacting. She was proud, irascible, and overbearing, while he was meek and gentle. In other respects they were equally matched, since both were greedy, ambitious, and worldly. A great stain, too, rested on his character; for he had been scandalously intimate with Barbara Villiers, mistress of Charles II., who gave him £5000, with which he bought an annuity of £500 a year, — thus enabling him to marry Miss Jennings.

In 1685 Charles II. died, and was succeeded by his brother the Duke of York, as James II. The new King rewarded his favorite, Colonel Churchill, with a Scotch peerage and the command of a regiment of

guards. James's two daughters, the princesses Mary and Anne, now became great personages. But from mutual jealousy they did not live together very harmoniously. Mary, the elder daughter, was much the superior of her sister, and her marriage with William of Orange was particularly happy.

The Princess Anne was weak and far from being interesting. But she was inordinately attached to Lady Churchill, who held a high post of honor and emolument in her household. It does not appear that the attachment was mutual between these two ladies, but the forms of it were kept up by Lady Churchill, who had ambitious ends to gain. She gradually acquired an absolute ascendency over the mind of the Princess, who could not live happily without her companionship and services. Lady Churchill was at this time remarkably striking in her appearance, with a clear complexion, regular features, majestic figure, and beautiful hair, which was dressed without powder. She also had great power of conversation, was frank, outspoken, and amusing, but without much tact. The Princess wrote to her sometimes four times a day, always in the strain of humility, and seemed utterly dependent upon her. Anne was averse to reading, spending her time at cards and frivolous pleasures. She was fond of etiquette, and exacting in trifles. She was praised for her piety, which would appear however to have been

formal and technical. She was placid, phlegmatic, and had no conversational gifts. She played tolerably on the guitar, loved the chase, and rode with the hounds until disabled by the gout, which was brought about by the pleasures of the table. In 1683 she married Prince George of Denmark, and by him had thirteen children, not one of whom survived her; most of them died in infancy. As the daughter of James II., she was of course a Tory in her political opinions.

Lady Churchill was also at that time a moderate Tory, and fanned the prejudices of her mistress. But in order to secure a still greater intimacy and freedom than was consistent with their difference in rank, the two ladies assumed the names of Mrs. Morley and Mrs. Freeman. In the correspondence between them the character of the Princess appears to the greater advantage, since she was at least sincere in her admiration and friendship. She assumes no superiority in any respect; in her intellectual dependence she is even humble.

Anne was seemingly disinterested in her friendship with Lady Churchill, having nothing to gain but services, for which she liberally compensated her. But the society of a weak woman could not have had much fascination for so independent and self-sustained a person as was the proud peeress. It eventually became irksome to her. But there was no outward flaw in the

friendship until Anne ascended the throne in 1702, — not even for several years after.

The accession of William and Mary in 1689 changed the position of Anne, to whom the nation now looked as a probable future queen. She was at that time severely censured for her desertion of her father James, and her conduct seemed both heartless and frivolous. But she was virtually in the hands of an unscrupulous woman and the great ministers of State. On the flight of the King, James II., the Princess Anne retired to Chatsworth, - the magnificent seat of the Earl of Devonshire, -- accompanied by Lady Churchill, her inseparable companion.

Two days before the coronation of William and Mary, Lord Churchill was created Earl of Marlborough, and was sworn a member of the Privy Council and a lord of the bedchamber. This elevation was owing to his military talents, which no one appreciated better than the King, who however never personally liked Marlborough, and still less his ambitious wife. He was no stranger to their boundless cupidity, though he pretended not to see it. He was politic, not being in a position to dispense with the services of the ablest military general of his realm.

William III. was a remarkably wise and clear-headed prince, and saw the dangers which menaced him, — the hostility of Louis XIV., the rebels in Ire-

land, and the disaffection among the Jacobite nobility in England, who secretly favored the exiled monarch. So he rewarded and elevated a man whom he both admired and despised. William had many sterling virtues; he was sincere and patriotic and public-spirited; he was a stanch Protestant of the Calvinistic school, and very attentive to his religious duties. But with all his virtues and services to the English nation, he was not a favorite. His reserve, coldness, and cynicism were in striking contrast with the affability of the Stuarts. He had no imagination and no graces; he disgusted the English nobles by drinking Holland gin, and by his brusque manners. But nothing escaped his eagle eye. On the field of battle he was as ardent and fiery as he was dull and phlegmatic at Hampton Court, his favorite residence. He was capable of warm friendships, uninteresting as he seemed to the English nobles; but he was intimate only with his Dutch favorites, like Bentinck and Keppel, whom he elevated to English peerages. He spent only a few months in England each year of the thirteen of his reign, being absorbed in war most of the time with Louis XIV. and the Irish rebels.

William found that his English throne was anything but a bed of roses. The Tories, in the tumults and dangers attending the flight of James II., had promoted his elevation; but they were secretly hostile

and when dangers had passed, broke out in factious opposition. The high-church clergy disliked a Calvinistic king in sympathy with Dissenters. The Irish gave great trouble under Tyrconnel and old Marshal Schomberg, the latter of whom was killed at the battle of the Boyne. A large party was always in opposition to the unceasing war with Louis XIV., whom William hated with implacable animosity.

The Earl of Marlborough, on the accession of William, was a moderate Tory, and was soon suspected of not being true to his sovereign. His treason might have resulted in the return of the Stuarts but for the energy and sagacity of Queen Mary, in whose hands the supreme executive power was placed by William when absent from the kingdom. She summoned at once the Parliament, prevented the defection of the navy, and ferreted out the hostile intrigues, in which the lord-treasurer Godolphin was also implicated. But for the fortunate naval victory of La Hogue over the French fleet, which established the naval supremacy of England, the throne of William and the Protestant succession would have been seriously endangered; for William was unfortunate in his Flemish campaigns.

When the King was apprised of the treasonable intrigues which endangered his throne, he magnanimously pardoned Godolphin and the Duke of Shrewsbury, but sent Marlborough to the Tower, although he

soon after released him, when it was found that several of the letters which compromised him had been forged. For some time Marlborough lived in comparative retirement, while his wife devoted herself to politics and her duties about the person of the Princess Anne, who was treated very coldly by her sister the Queen, and was even deprived of her guards. But the bickerings and quarrels of the royal sisters were suddenly ended by the death of Mary from the small-pox, which then fearfully raged in London. The grief of the King was sincere and excessive, as well as that of the nation, and his affliction softened his character and mitigated his asperity against Marlborough. Shortly after the death of his queen, William made Marlborough governor of the Duke of Gloucester, then (1698) a very promising prince, in the tenth year of his age. This prince, only surviving son of Anne, had a feeble body, and was unwisely crammed by Bishop Burnet, his preceptor, and overworked by Marlborough, who taught him military tactics. Neither his body nor his mind could stand the strain made upon him, and he was carried off at the age of eleven by a fever.

The untimely death of the Prince was a great disappointment to the nation, and cast a gloom over the remaining years of the reign of William, who from this time declined in health and spirits. One of his last acts was to appoint the Earl of Marlborough gen-

eral of the troops in Flanders, knowing that he was the only man who could successfully oppose the marshals of France. Only five days before his death the King sent a recommendation to Parliament for the union of Scotland and England, and the last act of Parliament to which he gave his consent was that which fixed the succession in the House of Hanover. At the age of fifty-one, while planning the campaign which was to make Marlborough immortal, William received his death-stroke, which was accidental. He was riding in the park of Hampton Court, when his horse stumbled and he was thrown, dislocating his collar-bone. The bone was set, and might have united but for the imprudence of the King, who insisted on going to Kensington on important business. Fever set in, and in a few days this noble and heroic king died (March 8, 1702), — the greatest of the English kings since the Wars of the Roses, to whom the English nation owed the peaceful settlement of the kingdom in times of treason and rebellion.

The Princess Anne, at the age of thirty-seven, quietly ascended the throne, and all eyes were at once turned to Marlborough, on whom the weight of public affairs rested. He was now fifty-three, active, wise, well poised, experienced, and generally popular in spite of his ambition and treason. He had, as we have already remarked, been a moderate Tory, but as he was the

advocate of war measures, he now became one of the leaders of the Whig party. Indeed, he was at this time the foremost man in England, on account of his great talents as a statesman and diplomatist as well as general, and for the ascendency of his wife over the mind of the Queen.

Next to him in power was the lord-treasurer Godolphin, to whom he was bound by ties of friendship, family alliance, and political principles. Like Marlborough, Godolphin had in early life been attached to the service of the House of Stuart. He had been page to Charles II., and lord chamberlain to Mary of Modena. The Princess Anne, when a young lady, became attached to this amiable and witty man, and would have married him if reasons of State had not prevented. After the Revolution of 1688 his merits were so conspicuous that he was retained in the service of William and Mary, and raised to the peerage. In sound judgment, extraordinary sagacity, untiring industry, and unimpeached integrity, he resembled Lord Burleigh in the reign of Elizabeth, and, like him, rendered great public services. Grave, economical, cautious, upright, courteous in manners, he was just the man for the stormy times in which he lived. He had his faults, being fond of play (the passion of that age) and of women. Says Swift, who libelled him, as he did every prominent man of the Whig party, "He could scratch

out a song in praise of his mistress with a pencil on a card, or overflow with tears like a woman when he had an object to gain."

But the real ruler of the land, on the accession of Anne, was the favored wife of Marlborough. If ever a subject stood on the very pinnacle of greatness, it was she. All the foreign ambassadors flattered her and paid court to her. The greatest nobles solicited or bought of her the lucrative offices in the gift of the Crown. She was the dispenser of court favors, as Mesdames de Maintenon and Pompadour were in France. She was the admiration of gifted circles, in which she reigned as a queen of society. Poets sang her praises and extolled her beauty; statesmen craved her influence. Nothing took place at court to which she was not privy. She was the mainspring of all political cabals and intrigues; even the Queen treated her with deference, as well as loaded her with gifts, and Godolphin consulted her on affairs of State. The military fame of her husband gave her unbounded *éclat*. No Englishwoman ever had such an exalted social position; she reigned in *salons* as well as in the closet of the Queen. And she succeeded in marrying her daughters to the proudest peers. Her eldest daughter, Henrietta, was the wife of an earl and prime minister. Her second daughter, Anne, married Lord Charles Spencer, the only son of the Earl of Sunderland, one of the leaders of the Whig party and

secretary of state. Her third daughter became the wife of the Earl, afterwards Duke, of Bridgewater; and the fourth and youngest daughter had for her husband the celebrated Duke of Montague, grand-master of the Order of the Bath.

Thus did Sarah Jennings rise. Her daughters were married to great nobles and statesmen, her husband was the most famous general of his age, and she herself was the favorite and confidential friend and adviser of the Queen. Upon her were showered riches and honor. She had both influence and power, — influence from her talents, and power from her position. And when she became duchess, — after the great victory of Blenheim, — and a princess of the German Empire, she had nothing more to aspire to in the way of fortune or favor or rank. She was the first woman of the land, next to the Queen, whom she ruled while nominally serving her.

There are very few people in this world, whether men or women, who remain unchanged under the influence of boundless prosperity. So rare are the exceptions, that the rule is established. Wealth, honor, and power will produce luxury, pride, and selfishness. How few can hope to be superior to Solomon, Mohammed, Constantine, Theodosius, Louis XIV., Madame de Maintenon, Queen Elizabeth, Maria Theresa, or Napoleon, in that sublime self-control which looks down

on the temptations of earth with the placid indifference of a Marcus Aurelius! Even prosperous people in comparatively humble life generally become arrogant and opinionated, and like to have things in their own way.

Now, Lady Marlborough was both proud by nature and the force of circumstances. She became an incarnation of arrogance, which she could not conceal, and which she never sought to control. When she became the central figure in the Court and in the State, flattered and sought after wherever she went, before whom the greatest nobles burned their incense, and whom the people almost worshipped in a country which has ever idolized rank and power, she assumed airs and gave vent to expressions that wounded her friend the Queen Anne bore her friend's intolerable pride, blended with disdain, for a long time after her accession. But her own character also began to change. Sovereigns do not like dictation from subjects, however powerful. And when securely seated on her throne, Anne began to avow opinions which she had once found it politic to conceal. She soon became as jealous of her prerogative as her uncle Charles and her father James had been of theirs. She was at heart a Tory, — as was natural, — and attached to the interests of her banished relatives. She looked upon the Whigs as hostile to what she held dear. She began to dislike ministers who had been in

high favor with the late King, especially Lord Chancellor Somers and Charles Montague, Earl of Halifax, — since these powerful nobles, allied with Godolphin and Marlborough, ruled England. Thus the political opinions of the Queen came gradually to be at variance with those advanced by her favorite, whose daughters were married to great Whig nobles, and whose husband was bent on continuing the war against Louis XIV. and the exiled Stuarts. But, as we have said, Anne for a long time suppressed her feelings of incipient alienation, produced by the politics and haughty demeanor of her favorite, and still wrote to her as her beloved Mrs. Freeman, and signed her letters, as usual, as her humble Morley. Her treatment of the Countess continued the same as ever, full of affection and confidence. She could not break with a friend who had so long been indispensable to her; nor had she strength of character to reveal her true feelings.

Meanwhile a renewed war was declared against Louis XIV. on account of his determination to place his grandson on the throne of Spain. The Tories were bitterly opposed to this war of the Spanish succession, as unnecessary, expensive, and ruinous to the development of national industry. They were also jealous of Marlborough, whose power they feared would be augmented by the war, as the commander-in-chief of the united Dutch and English forces. And the result

was indeed what they feared. His military successes were so great in this war that on his return to England he was created a duke, and soon after received unusual grants from Parliament, controlled by the Whigs, which made him the richest man in England as well as the most powerful politically. Yet even up to this time the relations between his wife and the Queen were apparently most friendly. But soon after this the haughty favorite became imprudent in the expressions she used before her royal mistress; she began to weary of the drudgeries of her office as mistress of the robes, and turned over her duties partially to a waiting-woman, who was destined ultimately to supplant her in the royal favor. The Queen was wounded to the quick by some things that the Duchess said and did, which she was supposed not to hear or see; for the Duchess was now occasionally careless as well as insolent. The Queen was forced to perceive that the Duchess disdained her feeble intellect and some of her personal habits, and was, moreover, hostile to her political opinions; and she began to long for an independence she had never truly enjoyed. But the Duchess, intoxicated with power and success, did not see the ground on which she stood; yet if she continued to rule her mistress, it was by fear rather than love.

About this period (1706) the struggles and hostilities of the Whigs and Tories were at their height. We have

in these times but a feeble conception of the bitterness of the strife of these two great parties in the beginning of the eighteenth century. It divided families, and filled the land with slanders and intrigues. The leaders of both parties were equally aristocratic and equally opposed to reform; both held the people in sovereign contempt. The struggle between them was simply a struggle for place and emolument. The only real difference in their principles was that one party was secretly in favor of the exiled family and was opposed to the French war, and the other was more jealously Protestant, and was in favor of the continuance of the war. The Tories accused Marlborough of needlessly prolonging the war in order to advance his personal interests, — from which charge it would be difficult to acquit him.

One of the most prominent leaders of the Tories was Harley, afterwards Earl of Oxford, who belonged to a Puritan family in Hertfordshire, and was originally a Whig. He entered Parliament in the early part of the reign of William. Macaulay, who could see no good in the Tories, in his violent political prejudices maintained that Harley was not a man of great breadth of intellect, and exerted an influence in Parliament disproportionate to his abilities. But he was a most insidious and effective enemy. He was sagacious enough to perceive the growing influence of men of

letters, and became their patron and friend. He advanced the fortunes of Pope, Arbuthnot, and Prior. He purchased the services of Swift, the greatest master of satire blended with bitter invective that England had known. Harley was not eloquent in speech; but he was industrious, learned, exact, and was always listened to with respect. Nor had he any scandalous vices. He could not be corrupted by money, and his private life was decorous. He abhorred both gambling and drunkenness, — the fashionable vices of that age. He was a refined, social, and cultivated man.

This statesman perceived that it was imperatively necessary for the success of his party to undermine the overpowering influence of the Duchess of Marlborough with the Queen. He detested her arrogance, disdain, and grasping ambition. Moreover, he had the firm conviction that England should engage only in maritime war. He hated the Dutch and moneyed men, and Dissenters of every sect, although originally one of them. And when he had obtained the leadership of his party in the House of Commons, he brought to bear the whole force of his intellect against both the Duke and Duchess. It was by his intrigues that the intimate relations between the Duchess and the Queen were broken up, and that the Duke became unpopular.

The great instrument by which he effected the disgrace of the imperious Duchess was a woman who was equally his cousin and the cousin of the Duchess, and for whom the all-powerful favorite had procured the office of chamber-woman and dresser, — in other words, a position which in an inferior rank is called that of lady's-maid; for the Duchess was wearied of constant attendance on the Queen, and to this woman some of her old duties were delegated. The name of this woman was Abigail Hill. She had been in very modest circumstances, but was a person of extraordinary tact, prudence, and discretion, though very humble in her address, — qualities the reverse of those which marked her great relative. Nor did the proud Duchess comprehend Miss Hill's character and designs any more than the all-powerful Madame de Montespan comprehended those of the widow Scarron when she made her the governess of her children. But Harley understood her, and their principles and aims were in harmony. Abigail Hill was a bigoted Tory, and her supreme desire was to ingratiate herself in the favor of her royal mistress, especially when she was tired of the neglect or annoyed by the railleries of her exacting favorite. By degrees the humble lady's-maid obtained the same ascendency over the Queen that had been exercised by the mistress of the robes, — in the one case secured by humility, assiduous attention, and con-

stant flatteries; in the other, obtained by talent and brilliant fascinations. Abigail was ruled by Harley; Sarah was ruled by no one but her husband, who understood her caprices and resentments, and seldom directly opposed her. Moreover, she was a strong-minded woman, who could listen to reason after her fits of passion had passed away.

The first thing of note which occurred, showing to the Duchess that her influence was undermined, was the refusal of the Queen to allow Lord Cowper, the lord chancellor, to fill up the various livings belonging to the Crown, in spite of the urgent solicitations of the Duchess. This naturally produced a coolness between Mrs. Freeman and Mrs. Morley. Harley was now the confidential adviser of the Queen, and counselled her "to go alone," — that is, to throw off the shackles which she had too long ignominiously worn; and Anne at once appointed high-church divines — Tories of course — to the two vacant bishoprics. The under-stream of faction was flowing unseen, but deep and strong, which the infatuated Duchess did not suspect.

The great victory of Ramillies (1706) gave so much *éclat* to Marlborough that the outbreak between his wife and the Queen was delayed for a time. That victory gave a new lease of power to the Whigs. Harley and St. John, the secret enemies of the Duke, welcomed him with their usual smiles and flatteries, and even

voted for the erection of Blenheim, one of the most expensive palaces ever built in England.

Meanwhile Harley pursued his intrigues to effect the downfall of the Duchess. Miss Hill, unknown to her great relative and patroness, married Mr. Masham, equerry to Prince George, who was shortly after made a brigadier-general and peer. Nothing could surpass the indignation of the Duchess when she heard of this secret marriage. That it should be concealed from her while it was known to the Queen, showed conclusively that her power over Anne was gone. And, still further, she perceived that she was supplanted by a relative whom she had raised from obscurity. She now comprehended the great influence of Harley at court, and also the declining favor of her husband. It was a bitter reflection to the proud Duchess that the alienation of the Queen was the result of her own folly and pride rather than of royal capriciousness. She now paid no inconsiderable penalty for the neglect of her mistress and the gratification of her pride. Pride has ever been the chief cause of the downfall of royal favorites. It ruined Louvois, Wolsey, and Thomas Cromwell; it broke the chain which bound Louis XIV. to the imperious Montespan. It ever goes before destruction. The Duchess of Marlborough forgot that her friend Mrs. Morley was also her sovereign the Queen. She might have retained the Queen's favor to the

end, in spite of political opinions; but she presumed too far on the ascendency which she had enjoyed for nearly thirty years. There is no height from which one may not fall; and it takes more ability to retain a proud position than to gain it. There are very few persons who are beyond the reach of envy and detraction; and the loftier the position one occupies, the more subtle, numerous, and desperate are one's secret enemies.

The Duchess was not, however, immediately "disgraced," — as the expression is in reference to great people who lose favor at court. She still retained her offices and her apartments in the royal palace; she still had access to the Queen; she was still addressed as "my dear Mrs. Freeman." But Mrs. Masham had supplanted her; and Harley, through the influence of the new favorite, ruled at court. The disaffection which had long existed between the secretary of state and the lord treasurer deepened into absolute aversion. It became the aim of both ministers to ruin each other. The Queen now secretly sided with the Tories, although she had not the courage to quarrel openly with her powerful ministers, or with her former favorite. Nor was "the great breach" made public.

But the angry and disappointed Duchess gave vent to her wrath and vengeance in letters to her husband and in speech to Godolphin. She entreated them to avenge

her quarrel. She employed spies about the Queen. She brought to bear her whole influence on the leaders of the Whigs. She prepared herself for an open conflict with her sovereign; for she saw clearly that the old relations of friendship and confidence between them would never return. A broken friendship is a broken jar; it may be mended, but never restored,—its glory has departed. And this is one of the bitterest experiences of life, on whomsoever the fault may be laid. The fault in this instance was on the side of the Duchess, and not on that of her patron. The arrogance and dictation of the favorite had become intolerable: it was as hard to bear as the insolence of a petted servant.

The Duke of Marlborough and Lord Godolphin took up the quarrel with zeal. They were both at the summit of power, and both were leaders of their party. The victories of the former had made him the most famous man in Europe and the greatest subject in England. They declined to serve their sovereign any longer, unless Harley were dismissed from office; and the able secretary of state was obliged to resign.

But Anne could not forget that she was forced to part with her confidential minister, and continued to be ruled by his counsels. She had secret nocturnal meetings in the palace with both Harley and Mrs. Masham, to the chagrin of the ministers. The court

became the scene of intrigues and cabals. Not only was Harley dismissed, but also Henry St. John, afterwards the famous Lord Bolingbroke, the intimate friend and patron of Pope. He was secretary of war, and was a man of great ability, of more genius even than Harley. He was an infidel in his religious opinions, and profligate in his private life. Like Harley, he was born of Puritan parents, and, like him, repudiated his early principles. He was the most eloquent orator in the House of Commons, which he entered in 1700 as a Whig. At that time he was much admired by Marlborough, who used his influence to secure his entrance into the cabinet. His most remarkable qualities were political sagacity, and penetration into the motives and dispositions of men. He gradually went over to the Tories, and his alliance with Harley was strengthened by personal friendship as well as political sympathies. He was the most interesting man of his age in society, — witty, bright, and courtly. In conversational powers he was surpassed only by Swift.

Meanwhile the breach between the Queen and the Duchess gradually widened. And as the former grew cold in her treatment of her old friend, she at the same time annoyed her ministers by the appointment of Tory bishops to the vacant sees. She went so far as to encroach on the prerogatives of the general of her armies, by making military appointments without his

consent. This interference Marlborough properly resented. But his influence was now on the wane, as the nation wearied of a war which, as it seemed to the Tories, he needlessly prolonged. Moreover, the Duke of Somerset, piqued by the refusal of the general to give a regiment to his son, withdrew his support from the Government. The Duke of Shrewsbury and other discontented noblemen left the Whig party. The unwise prosecution of Dr. Sacheverell for a seditious libel united the whole Tory party in a fierce opposition to the Government, which was becoming every day more unpopular. Harley was indefatigable in intrigues. "He fasted with religious zealots and feasted with convivial friends." He promised everything to everybody, but kept his own counsels.

In such a state of affairs, with the growing alienation of the Queen, it became necessary for the proud Duchess to resign her offices; but before doing this she made one final effort to regain what she had lost. She besought the Queen for a private interview, which was refused. Again importuned, her Majesty sullenly granted the interview, but refused to explain anything, and even abruptly left the room, and was so rude that the Duchess burst into a flood of tears which she could not restrain, — not tears of grief, but tears of wrath and shame.

Thus was finally ended the memorable friendship

between Mrs. Morley and Mrs. Freeman, which had continued for twenty-seven years. The Queen and Duchess never met again. Soon after, in 1710, followed the dismissal of Lord Godolphin, as lord treasurer, who was succeeded by Harley, created Earl of Oxford. Sunderland, too, was dismissed, and his post of secretary of state was given to St. John, created Viscount Bolingbroke. Lord Cowper resigned the seals, and Sir Simon Harcourt, an avowed adherent of the Pretender, became lord chancellor. The Earl of Rochester, the bitterest of all the Tories, was appointed president of the council. The Duke of Marlborough, however, was not dismissed from his high command until 1711. One reason for his dismissal was that he was suspected of aiming to make himself supreme. On his return from the battle of Malplaquet, he had coolly demanded to be made captain-general for life. Such a haughty demand would have been regarded as dangerous in a great crisis; it was absurd when public dangers had passed away. Even Lord Cowper, his friend the chancellor, shrunk from it with amazement. Such a demand would nave been deemed arrogant in Wallenstein, amid the successes of Gustavus Adolphus.

No insignificant cause of the triumph of the Tory party at this time was the patronage which the Tory leaders extended to men of letters, and the bitter political tracts which these literary men wrote and for which

they were paid. In that age the speeches of members of Parliament were not reported or published, and hence had but little influence on public opinion. Even ministers resorted to political tracts to sustain their power, or to undermine that of their opponents; and these were more efficient than speeches in the House of Commons. Bolingbroke was the most eloquent orator of his day; but no orators arose in Anne's reign equal to Pitt and Fox in the reign of George III. Hence the political leaders availed themselves of the writings of men of letters, with whom they freely associated. And this intercourse was deemed a great condescension on the part of nobles and cabinet ministers. In that age great men were not those who were famous for genius, but those who were exalted in social position. Still, genius was held in high honor by those who controlled public affairs, whenever it could be made subservient to their interests.

Foremost among the men of genius who lent their pen to the service of nobles and statesmen was Jonathan Swift, — clergyman, poet, and satirist. But he was more famous for his satire than for his sermons or his poetry. Everybody winced under his terrible assaults. He was both feared and hated, especially by the "great;" hence they flattered him and courted his society. He became the intimate friend and companion of Oxford and Bolingbroke. He dined with

the prime minister every Sunday, and in fact as often as he pleased. He rarely dined at home, and almost lived in the houses of the highest nobles, who welcomed him not only for the aid he gave them by his writings, but for his wit and agreeable discourse. At one time he was the most influential man in England, although poor and without office or preferment. He possessed two or three livings in Ireland, which together brought him about £500, on which he lived, — generally in London, at least when his friends were in power. They could not spare him, and he was intrusted with the most important secrets of state. His insolence was superb. He affected equality with dukes and earls; he "condescended" to accept their banquets. The first time that Bolingbroke invited him to dine, his reply was that "if the Queen gave his lordship a dukedom and the Garter and the Treasury also, he would regard them no more than he would a groat." This assumed independence was the habit of his life. He indignantly returned £100 to Harley, which the minister had sent him as a gift: he did not work for money, but for influence and a promised bishopric. But the Queen — a pious woman of the conventional school — would never hear of his elevation to the bench of bishops, in consequence of the "Tale of a Tub," in which he had ridiculed everything sacred and profane. He was the bitterest satirist that England

has produced. The most his powerful friends could do for him was to give him the deanery of St. Patrick's in Dublin, worth about £800 a year.

Swift was first brought to notice by Sir William Temple, in the reign of William and Mary, he being Sir William's secretary. At first he was a Whig, and a friend of Addison; but, neglected by Marlborough and Godolphin, — who cared but little for literary genius, — he became a Tory. In 1710 he became associated with Harley, St. John, Atterbury, and Prior, in the defence of the Tory party; but he never relinquished his friendship with Addison, for whom he had profound respect and admiration. Swift's life was worldly, but moral. He was remarkably temperate in eating and drinking, and parsimonious in his habits. One of his most bitter complaints in his letters to Stella — to whom he wrote every day — was of the expense of coach-hire in his visits to nobles and statesmen. It would seem that he creditably discharged his clerical duties. He attended the daily service in the cathedral, and preached when his turn came. He was charitable to the poor, and was a friend to Ireland, to whose people he rendered great services from his influence with the Government. He was beloved greatly by the Irish nation, in spite of his asperity, parsimony, and bad temper. He is generally regarded by critics as a selfish and heartless man; and his treatment of the two women

whose affections he had gained was certainly inexplicable and detestable. His old age was miserable and sad. He died insane, having survived his friends and his influence. But his writings have lived. His "Gulliver's Travels" is still one of the most famous and popular books in our language, in spite of its revolting and vulgar details. Swift, like Addison, was a great master of style, — clear, forcible, and natural; and in vigor he surpassed any writer of his age.

It was the misfortune of the Duchess of Marlborough to have this witty and malignant satirist for an enemy. He exposed her peculiarities, and laid bare her character with fearless effrontery. It was thus that he attacked the most powerful woman in England: "A lady of my acquaintance appropriated £26 a year out of her allowance for certain uses which the lady received, or was to pay to the lady or her order when called for. But after eight years it appeared upon the strictest calculation that the woman had paid but £4, and sunk £22 for her own pocket. It is but supposing £26 instead of £26,000, and by that you may judge what the pretensions of modern merit are when it happens to be its own paymaster." Who could stand before such insinuations? The Duchess afterwards attempted to defend herself against the charge of peculation as the keeper of the privy purse; but no one believed her. She was notoriously avaricious and unscrupulous

Swift spared no personage in the party of the Whigs, when by so doing he could please the leaders of the Tories. And he wrote in an age when libels were scandalous and savage, — libels which would now subject their authors to punishment. The acrimony of party strife at that time has never since been equalled. Even poets attacked each other with savage recklessness. There was no criticism after the style of Sainte-Beuve. Writers sought either to annihilate or to extravagantly praise. The jealousy which poets displayed in reference to each other's productions was as unreasonable and bitter as the envy and strife between country doctors, or musicians at the opera.

There was one great writer in the age of Queen Anne who was an exception to this nearly universal envy and bitterness; and this was Addison, who was as serene and calm as other critics were furious and unjust. Even Swift spared this amiable and accomplished writer, although he belonged to the Whig party. Joseph Addison, born in 1672, was the most fortunate man of letters in his age, — perhaps in any succeeding age in English history. He was early distinguished as a writer of Latin poems; and in 1699, at the age of twenty-seven, the young scholar was sent by Montague, at the recommendation of Somers, to the Continent, on a pension of £300 a year, to study languages with a view to the diplomatic service. On the accession of

Anne, Addison was obliged to return to literature for his support. Solicited by Godolphin, under the advice of Halifax, to write a poem on the victories of Marlborough, he wrote one so popular that he rapidly rose in favor with the Whig ministry. In 1708 he was made secretary for Ireland, under Lord Wharton, and entered Parliament. He afterwards was made secretary of state, married a peeress, and spent his last days at Holland House.

But Addison was no politician; nor did he distinguish himself in Parliament or as a political writer. He could not make a speech, not having been trained to debate. He was too timid, and his taste was too severe, for the arena of politicians. He is immortal for his essays, in which his humor is transcendent, and his style easy and graceful As a writer, he is a great artist. No one has ever been able to equal him in the charming simplicity of his style. Macaulay, a great artist himself in the use of language, places Addison on the summit of literary excellence and fame as an essayist. One is at loss to comprehend why so quiet and unobtrusive a scholar should have been selected for important political positions, but can easily understand why he was the admiration of the highest social circles for his wit and the elegance of his conversation. He was the personification of urbanity and every gentlemanly quality as well as one of the best scholars of his

age; but it was only in an aristocratic age, when a few great nobles controlled public affairs, that such a man could have been so recognized, rewarded, and honored. He died beloved and universally lamented, and his writings are still classics, and likely to remain so. He was not an oracle in general society, like Mackintosh and Macaulay; but among congenial and trusted friends he gave full play to his humor and was as charming as Washington Irving is said to have been in his chosen circle of admirers. Although he was a Whig, we do not read of any particular intimacy with such men as Marlborough and Godolphin. Marlborough, though an accomplished and amiable man, was not fond of the society of wits, as were Halifax, Montague, Harley, and St. John. As for the Duchess, she was too proud and grand for such a retired scholar as Addison to feel at ease in her worldly coteries. She cared no more for poetry or severe intellectual culture than politicians generally do. She shone only in a galaxy of ladies of rank and fashion. I do not read that she ever took a literary man into her service, and she had no more taste for letters than the sovereign she served. She was doubtless intellectual, shrewd, and discriminating; but her intellect was directed to current political movements, and she was coarse in her language. She would swear, like Queen Elizabeth, when excited to anger, and her wrath was terrible.

On the dismissal of the great Duke from all his offices, and the "disgrace" of his wife at court, they led a comparatively quiet life abroad. The Duchess had parted with her offices with great reluctance. Even when the Queen sent for the golden keys, which were the badge of her office, she refused to surrender them. No one could do anything with the infuriated termagant, and all were afraid of her. She threatened to print the private correspondence of the Queen as Mrs. Morley. The ministers dared not go into her presence, so fierce was her character when offended. To take from her the badge of office was like trying to separate a fierce lioness from her whelps. The only person who could manage her was her husband; and when at last he compelled her to give up the keys, she threw them in a storm of passion at his head, and raved like a maniac. It is amazing how the Queen could have borne so long with the Duchess's ungovernable temper, and still more so how her husband could. But he was always mild and meek in the retirement of his home,— a truly domestic man, to whom pomp was a weariness. Moreover, he was a singularly fortunate man. His ambition and pride and avarice were gratified beyond precedent in English history. He had become the foremost man in his country, and perhaps of his age. And his wife was still looked to as a great personage, not only because of her position and rank, but for her

abilities, which were doubtless great. She was still a power in the land, and was surrounded by children and grandchildren who occupied some of the highest social positions in England.

But she was not happy. What can satisfy a restless and ambitious woman whose happiness is in external pleasures? There is a limit to the favors which fortune showers; and when the limits of success are reached, there must be disappointment. The Duchess was discontented, and became morose, quarrelsome, and hard to please. Her children did not love her, and some were in bitter opposition to her. She was perpetually embroiled in family quarrels. Nothing could soften the asperity of her temper, or restrain her unreasonable exactions. At last England became hateful to her, and she and her husband quitted it, and resided abroad for several years. In the retirement of voluntary exile she answered the numerous accusations against her; for she was maligned on every side, and generally disliked, since her arrogance had become insupportable, even to her daughters.

Meanwhile the last days of Queen Anne's weary existence were drawing to a close. She was assailed with innumerable annoyances. Her body was racked with the gout, and her feeble mind was distracted by the contradictory counsels of her advisers. Any allusion to her successor was a knell of agony to her disturbed

soul. She became suspicious, and was even alienated from Harley, whom she dismissed from office only a few days before her death, which took place Aug. 1, 1714. She died without signing her will, by which omission Mrs. Masham was deprived of her legacy. She died childless, and the Elector George of Hanover ascended her throne.

On the death of the Queen, Marlborough returned to England; and it was one of the first acts of the new king to restore to him the post of captain-general of the land forces, while his son-in-law Sunderland was made lord-lieutenant of Ireland. A Whig cabinet was formed, but the Duke never regained his old political influence, and he gradually retired to private life, residing with the Duchess almost wholly at Holywell. His peaceful retirement, for which he had longed, came at last. He employed his time in surveying the progress of the building of Blenheim, — in which palace he was never destined to live, — and in simple pleasures, for which he never lost a taste. His wife occupied herself in matrimonial projects for her grandchildren, seeking alliances of ambition and interest.

In 1716 the Duke of Marlborough was attacked with a paralytic fit, from the effects of which he only partially recovered. To restore his health, he went to Bath, — then the fashionable and favorite watering-place, whose waters were deemed beneficial to invalids:

and here it was one of the scandals of the day that the rich nobleman would hobble from the public room to his lodgings, in a cold, dark night, to save sixpence in coach-hire. His enjoyments were now few and transient. His nervous system was completely shattered, after so many labors and exposures in his numerous campaigns. He lingered till 1722, when he died leaving a fortune of a million and a half pounds sterling besides his vast estates. No subject at that time had so large an income. He left a military fame never surpassed in England, — except by Wellington, — and a name unstained by cruelty. So distinguished a man of course received at his death unparalleled funeral honors. He was followed to his temporary resting-place in the vaults of Westminster by the most imposing procession that England had ever seen.

The Duchess of Marlborough was now the richest woman in England. Whatever influence proceeds from rank and riches she still possessed, though the titles and honors of the dukedom descended by act of Parliament, in 1706, to the Countess of Godolphin, with whom she was at war. The Duchess was now sixty-two, with unbroken health and inextinguishable ambition. She resided chiefly at Windsor Lodge, for she held for life the office of ranger of the forest. It was then that she was so severely castigated by Pope in his satirical lines on "Atossa," that she is said to have

sent £1000 to the poet, to suppress the libel,—her avarice and wrath giving way to her policy and pride. For twenty years after the death of her husband she continued an intriguing politician, but on ill-terms with Sir Robert Walpole, the prime minister, whom she cordially hated, more because of money transactions than political disagreement. She was a very disagreeable old woman, yet not without influence, if she was without friends. She had at least the merit of frankness, for she concealed none of her opinions of the King, nor of his ministers, nor of distinguished nobles. She was querulous, and full of complaints and exactions. One of her bitterest complaints was that she was compelled to pay taxes on her house in Windsor Park. She would even utter her complaints before servants. Litigation was not disagreeable to her if she had reason on her side, whether she had law or not.

It was not the good fortune of this strong-minded but unhappy woman to assemble around her in her declining years children and grandchildren who were attached to her. She had alienated even them. She had no intimate friends. "A woman not beloved by her own children can have but little claim to the affections of others." As we have already said, the Duchess was at open variance with her oldest daughter Henrietta, the Countess of Godolphin, to whom she was

never reconciled. Her quarrels with her granddaughter Lady Anne Egerton, afterwards Duchess of Bedford, were violent and incessant. She lived in perpetual altercation with her youngest daughter, the Duchess of Montague. She never was beloved by any of her children at any time, since they were in childhood and youth intrusted to the care of servants and teachers, while the mother was absorbed in political cabals at court. She consulted their interest merely in making for them grand alliances, to gratify her family pride. Her whole life was absorbed in pride and ambition. Nor did the mortification of a dishonored old age improve her temper. She sought neither the consolation of religion nor the intellectual stimulus of history and philosophy. To the last she was as worldly as she was morose. To the last she was a dissatisfied politician. She reviled the Whig administration of Walpole as fiercely as she did the Tory administration of Oxford. She haughtily refused the Order of the Bath for her grandson the Duke of Marlborough, which Walpole offered, contented with nothing less than the Garter. "Madam," replied Walpole, "they who take the Bath will sooner have the Garter." In her old age her ruling passion was hatred of Walpole. "I think," she wrote, "'t is thought wrong to wish anybody dead, but I hope 't is none to wish he may be hanged." Her wishes were partly gratified. for she

lived long enough to see this great statesman — so long supreme — driven to the very threshold of the Tower. For his son Horace she had equal dislike, and he returned her hatred with malignant satire. "Old Marlborough is dying," said the wit; "but who can tell? Last year she had lain a great while ill, without speaking, and her physician told her that she must be blistered, or she would die. She cried out, 'I won't be blistered, and I won't die.'"

She did indeed last some time longer; but with increasing infirmities, her amusements and pleasures became yearly more circumscribed. In former years she had sometimes occupied her mind with the purchase of land; for she was shrewd, and rarely made a bad bargain. Even at the age of eighty she went to the city to bid in person for the estate of Lord Yarmouth. But as her darkened day approached its melancholy close, she amused herself by dictating in bed her "Vindication." After spending thus six hours daily with her secretary, she had recourse to her chamber organ, the eight tunes of which she thought much better to hear than going to the Italian opera. Even society, in which she once shone, — for her intellect was bright and her person beautiful, — at last wearied her and gave her no pleasure. Like many lonely, discontented women, she became attached to animals; she petted three dogs, in which she saw

virtues that neither men nor women possessed. In her disquiet she often changed her residence. She went from Marlborough House to Windsor Lodge, and from Windsor Lodge to Wimbledon, only to discover that each place was damp and unhealthy. Wrapt up in flannels, and wheeled up and down her room in a chair, she discovered that wealth can only mitigate the evils of humanity, and realized how wretched is any person with a soul filled with discontent and bitterness, when animal spirits are destroyed by the infirmities of old age. All the views of this spoiled favorite of fortune were bounded by the scenes immediately before her. While she was not sceptical, she was far from being religious; and hence she was deprived of the highest consolations given to people in disappointment and sorrow and neglect. The older she grew, the more tenaciously did she cling to temporal possessions, and the more keenly did she feel occasional losses. Her intellect remained unclouded, but her feelings became callous. While she had no reverence for the dead, she felt increasing contempt for the living, — forgetting that no one, however exalted, can live at peace in an atmosphere of disdain.

At last she died, in 1744, unlamented and unloved, in the eighty-fourth year of her age, and was interred by the side of her husband, in the tomb in the chapel of Blenheim. She left £30,000 a year to her grand-

son, Lord John Spencer, provided he would never accept any civil or military office from the Government. She left also £20,000 to Lord Chesterfield, together with her most valuable diamond; but only small sums to most of her relatives or to charities. The residue of her property she left to that other grandson who inherited the title and estates of her husband. £60,000 a year, her estimated income, besides a costly collection of jewels, — one of the most valuable in Europe, — were a great property, when few noblemen at that time had over £30,000 a year.

The life of Sarah, Duchess of Marlborough, is a sad one to contemplate, with all her riches and honors. Let those who envy wealth or rank learn from her history how little worldly prosperity can secure happiness or esteem, without the solid virtues of the heart. The richest and most prosperous woman of her times was the object of blended derision, contempt, and hatred throughout the land which she might have adorned. Why, then, it may be asked, should I single out such a woman for a lecture, — a woman who added neither to human happiness, national prosperity, nor the civilization of her age? Why have I chosen her as one of the Beacon Lights of history? Because I know of no woman who has filled so exalted a position in society, and is so prominent a figure in history, whose

career is a more impressive warning of the dangers to be shunned by those who embark on the perilous and troubled seas of mere worldly ambition. God gave her that to which she aspired, and which so many envy; but "He sent leanness into her soul."

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MADAME RÉCAMIER

A. D. 1777–1849.

THE WOMAN OF SOCIETY.

MADAME RÉCAMIER.

THE WOMAN OF SOCIETY.

I KNOW of no woman who by the force of beauty and social fascinations, without extraordinary intellectual gifts or high birth, has occupied so proud a position as a queen of society as Madame Récamier. So I select her as the representative of her class.

It was in Italy that women first drew to their *salons* the distinguished men of their age, and exercised over them a commanding influence. More than three hundred years ago Olympia Fulvia Morata was the pride of Ferrara, — eloquent with the music of Homer and Virgil, a miracle to all who heard her, giving public lectures to nobles and professors when only a girl of sixteen; and Vittoria Colonna was the ornament of the Court of Naples, and afterwards drew around her at Rome the choicest society of that elegant capital, — bishops, princes, and artists, — equally the friend of Cardinal Pole and of Michael Angelo, and reigning in her retired apartments in the Benedictine convent

of St. Anne, even as the Duchesse de Longueville shone at the Hôtel de Rambouillet, with De Retz and La Rochefoucauld at her feet. This was at a period when the Italian cities were the centre of the new civilization which the Renaissance created, when ancient learning and art were cultivated with an enthusiasm never since surpassed.

The new position which women seem to have occupied in the sixteenth century in Italy, was in part owing to the wealth and culture of cities — ever the paradise of ambitious women — and the influence of poetry and chivalry, of which the Italians were the earliest admirers. Provençal poetry was studied in Italy as early as the time of Dante; and veneration for woman was carried to a romantic excess when the rest of Europe was comparatively rude. Even in the eleventh century we see in the southern part of Europe a respectful enthusiasm for woman coeval with the birth of chivalry. The gay troubadours expounded and explained the subtile metaphysics of love in every possible way: a peerless lady was supposed to unite every possible moral virtue with beauty and rank; and hence chivalric love was based on sentiment alone. Provence gave birth both to chivalry and poetry, and they were singularly blended together. Of about five hundred troubadours whose names have descended to us, more than half were noble, for chivalry took

cognizance only of noble birth. From Provence chivalry spread to Italy and to the north of France, and Normandy became pre-eminently a country of noble deeds, though not the land of song. It was in Italy that the poetical development was greatest.

After chivalry as an institution had passed away, it still left its spirit on society. There was not, however, much society in Europe anywhere until cities arose and became centres of culture and art. In the feudal castle there were chivalric sentiments but not society, where men and women of cultivation meet to give expression and scope to their ideas and sentiments. Nor can there be a high society without the aid of letters. Society did not arise until scholars and poets mingled with nobles as companions. This sort of society gained celebrity first in Paris, when women of rank invited to their *salons* literary men as well as nobles.

The first person who gave a marked impulse to what we call society was the Marquise de Rambouillet, in the seventeenth century. She was the first to set the fashion in France of that long series of social gatherings which were a sort of institution for more than two hundred years. Her father was a devoted friend of Henry IV., belonged to one of the first families of France, and had been ambassador to Rome. She was married in the year 1600, at the age of fifteen. When

twenty-two, she had acquired a distaste for the dissipations of the court and everything like crowded assemblies. She was among the first to discover that a crowd of men and women does not constitute society. Nothing is more foreign to the genius of the highest cultivated life than a crowded *salon*, where conversation on any interesting topic is impossible; where social life is gilded, but frivolous and empty; where especially the loftiest sentiments of the soul are suppressed. From an early period such crowds gathered at courts; but it was not till the seventeenth century that the *salon* arose, in which woman was a queen and an institution.

The famous queens of society in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries do not seem to have mixed much in miscellaneous assemblies, however brilliant in dress and ornament. They were more exclusive. They reserved their remarkable talents for social reunions, perhaps in modest *salons*, where among distinguished men and women they could pour out the treasures of the soul and mind; where they could inspire and draw out the sentiments of those who were gifted and distinguished. Madame du Deffand lived quietly in the convent of St. Joseph, but she gathered around her an elegant and famous circle, until she was eighty and blind. The Saturday assemblies of Mademoiselle de Scudéry, frequented by the most distinguished people

of Paris, were given in a modest apartment, for she was only a novelist. The same may be said of the receptions of Madame de la Sablière, who was a childless widow, of moderate means. The Duchesse de Longueville — another of those famous queens — saw her best days in the abbey of Port Royal. Madame Récamier reigned in a small apartment in the Abbaye-au-Bois. All these carried out in their *salons* the rules and customs which had been established by Madame de Rambouillet. It was in her *salon* that the French Academy originated, and its first members were regular visitants at her hotel. Her conversation was the chief amusement. We hear of neither cards nor music; but there were frequent parties to the country, walks in the woods,—a perpetual animation, where ceremony was banished. The brilliancy of her parties excited the jealousy of Richelieu. Hither resorted those who did not wish to be bound by the stiffness of the court. At that period this famous hotel had its pedantries, but it was severely intellectual. Hither came Mademoiselle de Scudéri; Mademoiselle de Montpensier, granddaughter of Henry IV.; Vaugelas, and others of the poets; also Balzac, Voiture, Racan, the Duc de Montausier, Madame de Sévigné, Madame de la Fayette, and others. The most marked thing about this hotel was the patronage extended to men of letters. Those great French ladies welcomed poets and scholars, and encouraged them,

and did not allow them to starve, like the literary men of Grub Street. Had the English aristocracy extended the same helping hand to authors, the condition of English men of letters in the eighteenth century would have been far less unfortunate. Authors in France have never been excluded from high society; and this was owing in part to the influence of the Hôtel de Rambouillet, which sought an alliance between genius and rank. It is this blending of genius with rank which gave to society in France its chief attraction, and made it so brilliant.

Mademoiselle de Scudéry, Madame de la Sablière, and Madame de Longueville followed the precedents established by Madame de Rambouillet and Madame de Maintenon, and successively reigned as queens of society,—that is, of chosen circles of those who were most celebrated in France,—raising the intellectual tone of society, and inspiring increased veneration for woman herself.

But the most celebrated of all these queens of society was Madame Récamier, who was the friend and contemporary of Madame de Staël. She was born at Lyons, in 1777, not of high rank, her father, M. Bernard, being only a prosperous notary. Through the influence of Calonne, minister of Louis XVI., he obtained the lucrative place of Receiver of the Finances, and removed to Paris, while his only daughter Juliette was sent to a convent.

near Lyons, to be educated, where she remained until she was ten years of age, when she rejoined her family. Juliette's education was continued at home, under her mother's superintendence; but she excelled in nothing especially except music and dancing, and was only marked for grace, beauty, and good-nature.

Among the visitors to her father's house was Jacques Rose Récamier, a rich banker, born in Lyons, 1751,— kind-hearted, hospitable, fine-looking, and cultivated, but of frivolous tastes. In 1793, during the Reign of Terror, being forty-two, he married the beautiful daughter of his friend, she being but fifteen. This marriage seems to have been one of convenience and vanity, with no ties of love on either side,— scarcely friendship, or even sentiment. For a few years Madame Récamier led a secluded life, on account of the troubles and dangers incident to the times, but when she did emerge from retirement she had developed into the most beautiful woman in France, and was devoted to a life of pleasure. Her figure was flexible and elegant, her head well-poised, her complexion brilliant, with a little rosy mouth, pearly teeth, black curling hair, and soft expressive eyes, with a carriage indicative of indolence and pride, yet with a face beaming with good-nature and sympathy.

Such was Madame Récamier at eighteen, so remarkable for beauty that she called forth murmurs of

admiration wherever she appeared. As it had long been a custom in Paris, and still is, to select the most beautiful and winning woman to hand round the purse in churches for all charities, she was selected by the Church of St. Roche, the most fashionable church of that day; and so great was the enthusiasm to see this beautiful and bewitching creature, that the people crowded the church, and even mounted on the chairs, and, though assisted by two gentlemen, she could scarcely penetrate the crowd. The collection on one occasion amounted to twenty thousand francs, — equal, perhaps, to ten thousand dollars to-day. This adaptation of means to an end has never been disdained by the Catholic clergy. What would be thought in Philadelphia or New York, in an austere and solemn Presbyterian church, to see the most noted beauty of the day handing round the plate? But such is one of the forms which French levity takes, even in the consecrated precincts of the church.

The fashionable drive and promenade in Paris was Longchamps, now the Champs Élysées, and it was Madame Récamier's delight to drive in an open carriage on this beautiful avenue, especially on what are called the holy days, — Wednesdays and Fridays, — when her beauty extorted salutations from the crowd. Of course, such a woman excited equal admiration in the *salons*, and was soon invited to the fêtes and parties of the

Directory, through Barras, one of her admirers. There she saw Bonaparte, but did not personally know him at that time. At one of these fêtes, rising at full length from her seat to gaze at the General, sharing in the admiration for the hero, she at once attracted the notice of the crowd, who all turned to look at her; which so annoyed Bonaparte that he gave her one of his dreadful and withering frowns, which caused her to sink into her seat with terror.

In 1798 M. Récamier bought the house which had belonged to Necker, in what is now the Chaussée d'Antin. This led to an acquaintance between Madame Récamier and Madame de Staël, which soon ripened into friendship. In the following year M. Récamier, now very rich, established himself in a fine château at Clichy, a short distance from Paris, where he kept open house. Thither came Lucien Bonaparte, at that time twenty-four years of age, bombastic and consequential, and fell in love with his beautiful hostess, as everybody else did. But Madame Récamier, with all her fascinations, was not a woman of passion; nor did she like the brother of the powerful First Consul, and politely rejected his addresses. He continued, however, to persecute her with his absurd love-letters for a year, when, finding it was hopeless to win so refined and virtuous a lady as Madame Récamier doubtless was, — partly because she was a woman of high principles,

and partly because she had no great temptations, — the pompous lover, then Home Minister, ceased his addresses.

But Napoleon, who knew everything that was going on, had a curiosity to see this woman who charmed everybody, yet whom nobody could win, and she was invited to one of his banquets. Although she obeyed his summons, she was very modest and timid, and did not try to make any conquest of him. She was afraid of him, as Madame de Staël was, and most ladies of rank and refinement. He was a hero to men rather than to women, — at least to those women who happened to know him or serve him. That cold and cutting irony of which he was master, that haughty carriage and air which he assumed, that selfish and unsympathetic nature, that exacting slavery to his will, must have been intolerable to well-bred women who believed in affection and friendship, of which he was incapable, and which he did not even comprehend. It was his intention that the most famous beauty of the day should sit next to him at this banquet, and he left the seat vacant for her; but she was too modest to take it unless specially directed to do so by the Consul, which either pride or etiquette prevented. This modesty he did not appreciate, and he was offended, and she never saw him again in private; but after he became Emperor, he made every effort to secure her services

as maid-of-honor to one of the princesses. through his minister Fouché, in order to ornament his court. It was a flattering honor, since she was only the wife of a banker. without title; but she refused it, which stung Napoleon with vexation, since it indicated to him that the fashionable and high-born women of the day stood aloof from him. Many a woman was banished because she would not pay court to him,—Madame de Staël, the Duchesse de Chevreuse, and others. Madame Récamier was now at the height of fashion, admired by Frenchmen and foreigners alike; not merely by such men as the Montmorencys, Narbonne, Jordan, Barrère, Moreau, Bernadotte, La Harpe, but also by Metternich, then secretary of the Austrian embassy, who carried on a flirtation with her all winter. All this was displeasing to Napoleon, more from wounded pride than fear of treason. In the midst of her social triumphs, after having on one occasion received uncommon honor, Napoleon, now emperor, bitterly exclaimed that more honor could not be shown to the wife of a marshal of France, — a remark very indicative of his character, showing that in his estimation there was no possible rank or fame to be compared with the laurels of a military hero. A great literary genius, or woman of transcendent beauty, was no more to him than a great scholar or philosopher is to a vulgar rich man in making up his parties.

It was in the midst of these social successes that the husband of Madame Récamier lost his fortune. He would not have failed had he been able to secure a loan from the Bank of France of a million of francs; but this loan the Government peremptorily refused,—doubtless from the hostility of Napoleon; so that the banker was ruined because his wife chose to ally herself with the old aristocracy and refuse the favors of the Emperor. In having pursued such a course, Madame Récamier must have known that she was the indirect cause of her husband's failure. But she bore the reverse of fortune with that equanimity which seems to be peculiar to the French, and which only lofty characters, or people of considerable mental resources, are able to assume or feel. Most rich men, when they lose their money, give way to despondency and grief, conscious that they have nothing to fall back upon; that without money they are nothing. Madame Récamier at once sold her jewels and plate, and her fine hotel was offered for sale. Neither she nor her husband sought to retain anything amid the wreck, and they cheerfully took up their abode in a small apartment,—which conduct won universal sympathy and respect, so that her friends were rather increased than diminished, and she did not lose her social prestige and influence, which she would have lost in cities where money is the highest, and sometimes the only, test of social position.

Madame de Staël wrote letters of impassioned friendship, and nobles and generals paid unwonted attention. The death of her mother soon followed, so that she spent the summer of 1807 in extreme privacy, until persuaded by her constant friend Madame de Staël to pay her a visit at her country-seat near Geneva, where she met Prince Frederick of Prussia, nephew of the great Frederic, who became so enamored of her that he sought her hand in marriage. Princes, in those days, had such a lofty idea of their rank that they deemed it an honor to be conferred on a woman, even if married, to take her away from her husband. For a time Madame Récamier seemed dazzled with this splendid proposal, and she even wrote to the old banker, her husband, asking for a divorce from him. I think I never read of a request so preposterous or more disgraceful. — the greatest flaw I know in her character, — showing the extreme worldliness of women of fashion at that time, and the audacity which is created by universal flattery. What is even more surprising, her husband did not refuse the request, but wrote to her a letter of so much dignity, tenderness, and affection that her eyes were opened. "She saw the protector of her youth, whose indulgence had never failed her, growing old, and despoiled of fortune; and to leave him who had been so good to her, even if she did not love him, seemed rightly the height of ingratitude

and meanness." So the Prince was dismissed, very much to his surprise and chagrin; and some there were who regarded M. Récamier as a very selfish man, to appeal to the feelings and honor of his wife, and thus deprive her of a splendid destiny. Such were the morals of fashionable people in Europe during the eighteenth century.

Madame Récamier did not meddle with politics, like Madame de Staël and other strong-minded women before and since; but her friendship with a woman whom Napoleon hated so intensely as he did the authoress of "Delphine" and "Germany," caused her banishment to a distance of forty leagues from Paris, — one of the customary acts which the great conqueror was not ashamed to commit, and which put his character in a repulsive light. Nothing was more odious in the character of Napoleon than his disdain of women, and his harsh and severe treatment of those who would not offer incense to him. Madame de Staël, on learning of the Emperor's resentment towards her friend, implored her not to continue to visit her, as it would certainly be reported to the Government, and result in her banishment; but Madame Récamier would obey the impulses of friendship in the face of all danger. And the result was indeed her exile from that city which was so dear to her, as well as to all fashionable women and all gifted men.

In exile this persecuted woman lived in a simple way, first at Châlons and then at Lyons, for her means were now small. Her companions, however, were great people, as before her banishment and in the days of her prosperity, — in which fact we see some modification of the heartlessness which so often reigns in fashionable circles. Madame Récamier never was without friends as well as admirers. Her amiability, wit, good-nature, and extraordinary fascinations always attracted gifted and accomplished people of the very highest rank.

It was at Lyons that she formed a singular friendship, which lasted for life; and this was with a young man of plebeian origin, the son of a printer, with a face disfigured, and with manners uncouth, — M. Ballanche, whose admiration amounted to absolute idolatry, and who demanded no other reward for his devotion than the privilege of worship. To be permitted to look at her and listen to her was enough for him. Though ugly in appearance, and with a slow speech, he was well versed in the literature of the day, and his ideas were lofty and refined.

I have never read of any one who has refused an unselfish idolatry, the incense of a worshipper who has no outward advantage to seek or gain, — not even a king. If it be the privilege of a divinity to receive the homage of worshippers, why should a beautiful and

kind-hearted woman reject the respectful adoration of a man contented with worship alone? What could be more flattering even to a woman of the world, especially if this man had noble traits and great cultivation? Such was Ballanche, who viewed the mistress of his heart as Dante did his Beatrice, though not with the same sublime elevation, for the object of Dante's devotion was on the whole imaginary, — the worship of qualities which existed in his own mind alone, — whereas the admiration of Ballanche was based on the real presence of flesh and blood animated by a lovely soul.

Soon after this friendship had begun, Madame Récamier made a visit to Italy, travelling in a *voiture*, not a private carriage, and arrived at Rome in Passion Week, 1812, when the Pope was a prisoner of Napoleon at Fontainebleau, and hence when his capital was in mourning, — sad and dull, guarded and occupied by French soldiers. The only society at Rome in that eventful year which preceded the declining fortunes of Napoleon, was at the palace of Prince Torlonia the banker; but the modest apartment of Madame Récamier on the Corso was soon filled with those who detested the rule of Napoleon. Soon after, Ballanche came all the way from Lyons to see his star of worship, and she kindly took him everywhere, for even in desolation the Eternal City is the most interesting spot

on the face of the globe. From Rome she went to Naples (December, 1813), when the King Murat was forced into the coalition against his brother-in-law. In spite of the hatred of Napoleon, his sister the Queen of Naples was devoted to the Queen of Beauty, who was received at court as an ambassadress rather than as an exile. On the fall of Napoleon the next year the Pope returned from his thraldom; and Madame Récamier, being again in Rome, witnessed one of the most touching scenes of those eventful days, when all the nobles and gentry went out to meet their spiritual and temporal sovereign, and amid the exultant shouts and rapture of the crowd, dragged his gilded carriage to St. Peter's Church, where was celebrated a solemn *Te Deum*.

But Madame Récamier did not tarry long in Italy She hastened back to Paris, for the tyrant was fallen She was now no longer beaming in youthful charms, with groups of lovers at her feet, but a woman of middle age, yet still handsome,—for such a woman does not lose her beauty at thirty-five,—with fresh sources of enjoyment, and a keen desire for the society of intellectual and gifted friends. She now gave up miscellaneous society,—that is, fashionable and dissipated crowds of men and women in noisy receptions and ceremonious parties,—and drew around her the lines of a more exclusive circle. Hither came to see her Ballanche, now a resident of Paris, Mathieu de Mont-

morency, M. de Châteaubriand, the Duc de Broglie, and the most distinguished nobles of the ancient régime, with the literary lions who once more began to roar on the fall of the tyrant who had silenced them, including such men as Barante and Benjamin Constant. Also great ladies were seen in her *salon*, for her husband's fortunes had improved, and she was enabled again to live in her old style of splendor Among these ladies were the Duchesse de Cars, the Marchionesses de Podences, Castellan, and d'Aguesseau, and the Princess-Royal of Sweden. Also distinguished foreigners sought her society, — Wellington, Madame Krüdener, the friend of the Emperor Alexander, the beautiful Duchess of Devonshire, the Duke of Hamilton, and whoever was most distinguished in that brilliant circle of illustrious people who congregated at Paris on the restoration of the Bourbons.

In 1819 occurred the second failure of M. Récamier, which necessarily led again to a new and more humble style of life. The home which Madame Récamier now selected, and where she lived until 1838, was the Abbaye-au-Bois, while her father and her husband, the latter now sixty-nine, lived in a small lodging in the vicinity. She occupied in this convent — a large old building in the Rue de Sèvres — a small *appartement* in the third story, with a brick floor, and uneven at that. She afterwards removed to a

small *appartement* on the first floor, which looked upon the convent garden.

Here, in this seclusion, impoverished, and no longer young, Madame Récamier received her friends and guests. And they were among the most distinguished people of France, especially the Duc de Montmorency and the Viscount Châteaubriand. The former was a very religious man, and the breath of scandal never for a moment tainted his reputation, or cast any reproach on the memorable friendship which he cultivated with the most beautiful woman in France. This illustrious nobleman was at that time Minister of Foreign Affairs, and was sent to the celebrated Congress of Vienna, where Metternich, the greatest statesman of the age, presided and inaugurated a reaction from the principles of the Revolution.

But more famous than he was Châteaubriand, then ambassador at London, and afterwards joined with Montmorency as delegate to the Congress of Vienna, and still later Minister of Foreign Affairs, who held during the reign of Louis XVIII. the most distinguished position in France as a statesman, a man of society, and a literary man. The author of the "Genius of Christianity" was aristocratic, moody, fickle, and vain, almost spoiled with the incense of popular idolatry. No literary man since Voltaire had received such incense. He was the acknowledged head of French

literature, a man of illustrious birth, noble manners, poetical temperament, vast acquisitions, and immense social prestige. He took sad and desponding views of life, was intensely conservative, but had doubtless a lofty soul as well as intellectual supremacy He occupied distinct spheres, — was poet, historian, statesman, orator, and the oracle of fashionable *salons*. although he loved seclusion, and detested crowds. The virtues of his private life were unimpeached, and no man was more respected by the nation than this cultivated scholar and gentleman of the old school.

It was between this remarkable man and Madame Récamier that the most memorable friendship of modern times took place. It began in the year 1817 at the bedside of Madame de Staël, but did not ripen into intimacy until 1818, when he was fifty and she was forty-one. His genius and accomplishments soon conquered the first place in her heart; and he kept that place until his death in 1848, — thirty years of ardent and reproachless friendship. Her other friends felt great inquietude in view of this friendship, fearing that the incurable melancholy and fitful moods of the Viscount would have a depressing influence on her; but she could not resist his fascinations any easier than he could resist hers. The Viscount visited her every day, generally in the afternoon; and when absent on his diplomatic missions to the various foreign courts.

he wrote her, every day, all the details of his life, as well as sentiments. He constantly complained that she did not write as often as he did. His attachment was not prompted by that unselfish devotion which marked Ballanche, who sought no return, only the privilege of adoration. Châteaubriand was exacting, and sought a warmer and still increasing affection, which it seems was returned. Madame Récamier's nature was not passionate; it was simply affectionate. She sought to have the wants of her soul met. She rarely went to parties or assemblies, and seldom to the theatre. She craved friendship, and of the purest and loftiest kind. She was tired of the dissipation of society and even of flatteries, of which the Viscount was equally weary. The delusions of life were dispelled, in her case, at forty; in his, at fifty.

This intimacy reminds us of that of Louis XIV. and Madame de Maintenon. Neither could live without the other. But their correspondence does not reveal any improper intimacy. It was purely spiritual and affectionate; it was based on mutual admiration; it was strengthened by mutual respect for each other's moral qualities. And the friendship gave rise to no scandal; nor was it in any way misrepresented. Every day the statesman, when immersed even in the cares of a great office, was seen at her modest dwelling, at the same hour, — about four o'clock, — and no other

visitors were received at that hour. After unbending his burdened soul, or communicating his political plans, or detailing the gossip of the day, all to the end of securing sympathy and encouragement from a great woman, he retired to his own hotel, and spent the evening with his sick wife. One might suppose that his wife would have been jealous. The wife of Carlyle never would have permitted her husband to visit on such intimate terms the woman he most admired, — Lady Ashburton, — without a separation. But Châteaubriand's wife favored rather than discouraged the intimacy, knowing that it was necessary to his happiness. Nor did the friendship between Madame Récamier and the Duc de Montmorency, the political rival of Châteaubriand, weaken the love of the latter or create jealousy, a proof of his noble character. And when the pious Duke died, both friends gave way to the most sincere grief.

It was impossible for Madame Récamier to live without friendship. She could give up society and fortune, but not her friends. The friendly circle was not large, but, as we have said, embraced the leading men of France. Her limited means made no difference with her guests, since these were friends and admirers. Her attraction to men and women alike did not decrease with age or poverty.

The fall of Charles X., in 1830, led of course to the political downfall of Châteaubriand, and of many

of Madame Récamier's best friends. But there was a younger class of an opposite school who now came forward, and the more eminent of these were also frequent visitors to the old queen of society, — Ampère, Thiers, Mignet, Guizot, De Tocqueville, Sainte-Beuve. Nor did she lose the friendship, in her altered fortunes, of queens and nobles. She seems to have been received with the greatest cordiality in whatever château she chose to visit. Even Louis Napoleon, on his release from imprisonment in the castle of Ham, lost no time in paying his respects to the woman his uncle had formerly banished.

One of the characteristic things which this interesting lady did, was to get up a soirée in her apartments at the convent in aid of the sufferers of Lyons from an inundation of the Rhône, from which she realized a large sum. It was attended by the *élite* of Paris. Lady Byron paid a hundred francs for her ticket. The Duc de Noailles provided the refreshments, the Marquis de Verac furnished the carriages, and Châteaubriand acted as master of ceremonies. Rachel acted in the rôle of "Esther," not yet performed at the theatre, while Garcia, Rubini, and Lablache kindly gave their services. It was a very brilliant entertainment, one of the last in which Madame Récamier presided as a queen of society. It showed her kindness of heart, which was the most conspicuous trait of her character.

She wished to please, but she desired still more to be of assistance. The desire to please may arise from blended vanity and good-nature; the desire to be useful is purely disinterested. In all her intercourse with friends we see in Madame Récamier a remarkable power of sympathy. She was not a woman of genius, but of amazing tact, kindness, and amiability. She entered with all her heart into the private and confidential communications of her friends, and was totally free from egotism, forgetting herself in the happiness of others. If not a woman of genius, she had extraordinary good sense, and her advice was seldom wrong. It was this union of sympathy, kindness, tact, and wisdom which made Madame Récamier's friendship so highly prized by the greatest men of the age. But she was exclusive; she did not admit everybody to her salon, — only those whom she loved and esteemed, generally from the highest social circle. Sympathy cannot exist except among equals. We associate Paula with Jerome, the Countess Matilda with Hildebrand, Vittoria Colonna with Michael Angelo, Hannah More with Dr. Johnson. Friendship is neither patronage nor philanthropy; and the more exalted the social or political or literary position, the more rare friendship is and the more beautiful when it shines.

It was the friendships of Madame Récamier with distinguished men and women which made her famous

more than her graces and beauty. She soothed, encouraged, and fortified the soul of Châteaubriand in his fits of depression and under political disappointments, always herself cheerful and full of vivacity, — an angel of consolation and spiritual radiance. Her beauty at this period was moral rather than physical, since it revealed the virtues of the heart and the quickness of spiritual insight. In her earlier days — the object of universal and unbounded admiration, from her unparalleled charms and fascinations — she may have coquetted more than can be deemed decorous in a lady of fashion; but if so, it was vanity and love of admiration which were the causes. She never appealed to passion; for, as we have said, her own nature was not passionate. She was satisfied to be worshipped. The love of admiration is not often allied with that passion which loses self-control, and buries one in the gulf of mad infatuation. The mainspring of her early life was to please, and of her later life to make people happy. A more unselfish woman never lived. Those beauties who lure to ruin, as did the Sirens, are ever heartless and selfish, — like Cleopatra and Madame de Pompadour. There is nothing on this earth more selfish than what foolish and inexperienced people often mistake for love. There is nothing more radiant and inspiring than the moral beauty of the soul. The love that this creates is tender, sympathetic, kind

and benevolent. Nothing could be more unselfish and beautiful than the love with which Madame Récamier inspired Ballanche, who had nothing to give and nothing to ask but sympathy and kindness.

One of the most touching and tender friendships ever recorded was the intercourse between Châteaubriand and Madame Récamier when they were both old and infirm. Nothing is more interesting than their letters and daily interviews at the convent, where she spent her latter days. She was not only poor, but she had also become blind, and had lost all relish for fashionable society, — not a religious recluse, saddened and penitent, like the Duchesse de Longueville in the vale of Chevreuse, but still a cheerful woman, fond of music, of animated talk, and of the political news of the day. Châteaubriand was old, disenchanted, disappointed, melancholy, and full of infirmities. Yet he never failed in the afternoon to make his appearance at the Abbaye, driven in a carriage to the threshold of the salon, where he was placed in an arm-chair and wheeled to a corner of the fireplace, when he poured out his sorrows and received consolation. Once, on one of those dreary visits, he asked his friend to marry him, — he being then seventy-nine and she seventy-one, — and bear his illustrious name. "Why," said she, "should we marry at our age? There is no impropriety in my taking care of you. If solitude is painful to

you, I am ready to live in the same house with you. The world will do justice to the purity of our friendship. Years and blindness give me this right. Let us change nothing in so perfect an affection."

The old statesman and historian soon after died, broken in mind and body, living long enough to see the fall of Louis Philippe. In losing this friend of thirty years Madame Récamier felt that the mainspring of her life was broken. She shed no tears in her silent and submissive grief, nor did she repel consolation or the society of friends, "but the sad smile which played on her lips was heart-rending. . . . While witnessing the decline of this noble genius, she had struggled, with singular tenderness, against the terrible effect of years upon him; but the long struggle had exhausted her own strength, and all motives for life were gone."

Though now old and blind, yet, like Mme. du Deffand at eighty, Madame Récamier's attractions never passed away. The great and the distinguished still visited her, and pronounced her charming to the last. Her vivacity never deserted her, nor her desire to make every one happy around her. She was kept interesting to the end by the warmth of her affections and the brightness of her mind. As it is the soul which is the glory of a woman, so the soul sheds its rays of imperishable light on the last pathway of existence. No beauty ever utterly passes away when animated by what is immortal.

Madame Récamier died at last of cholera, that disease which of all others she had ever most dreaded and avoided. On the 11th of May, 1849, amid weeping relatives and kneeling servants and sacerdotal prayers, this interesting woman passed away from earth. To her might be applied the eulogy of Burke on Marie Antoinette.

Madame Récamier's place in society has never since been filled with equal grace and fascination. She adopted the customs of the Hôtel de Rambouillet,—certain rules which good society has since observed. She discouraged the *tête-à-tête* in a low voice in a mixed company; if any one in her circle was likely to have especial knowledge, she would appeal to him with an air of deference; if any one was shy, she encouraged him; if a *mot* was particularly happy, she would take it up and show it to the company. Presiding in her own *salon*, she talked but little herself, but rather exerted herself to draw others out; without being learned, she exercised great judgment in her decisions when appeals were made to her as the presiding genius; she discouraged everything pedantic and pretentious; she dreaded exaggerations; she kept her company to the subject under discussion, and compelled attention; she would allow no slang; she insisted upon good-nature and amiability, which more than anything else marked society in the eighteenth century.

We read so much of those interesting reunions in the *salons* of distinguished people in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries that we naturally seek to know what constituted their peculiar charm. It seems to me to have been conversation, which is both an art and a gift. In these exclusive meetings women did not reign in consequence of their beauty so much as their wit. Their vivacity, intelligence, and tact, I may add also their good-nature, were a veil to cover up all eccentricities. It was when Madame du Deffand was eighty, and blind, that Horace Walpole pronounced her to be the most interesting woman in France. Madame de Staël, never beautiful, was the life of a party at forty-five; Madame Récamier was in her glory at fifty; Hannah More was most sought when she was sixty. There can be no high society where conversation is not the chief attraction; and men seldom learn to talk well when not inspired by gifted women. They may dictate like Dr. Johnson, or preach like Coleridge in a circle of admirers, or give vent to sarcasms and paradoxes like Carlyle; but they do not please like Horace Walpole, or dazzle like Wilkes, or charm like Mackintosh. When society was most famous at Paris, it was the salon — not the card table, or the banquet, or the ball — which was most sought by cultivated men and women, where conversation was directed by gifted women. Women are nothing in the social circle who cannot draw out

the sentiments of able men; and a man of genius gains more from the inspiration of one brilliant woman than from all the bookworms of many colleges. In society a bright and witty woman not merely shines, but she reigns. Conversation brings out all her faculties, and kindles all her sensibilities, and gives expression to her deepest sentiments. Her talk is more than music; it is music rising to the heights of eloquence. She is more even than an artist: she is a goddess before whom genius delights to burn its incense.

Success in this great art of conversation depends as much upon the disposition as upon the brains. The remarkable women who reigned in the salons of the last century were all distinguished for their good-nature, — good-nature based on toleration and kind feeling, rather than on insipid acquiescence. There can be no animated talk without dissent; and dissent should be disguised by the language of courtesy. As vanity is one of the mainsprings of human nature, and is nearly universal, the old queens of society had the tact to hide what could not easily be extirpated; and they were adepts in the still greater art of seeming to be unconscious. Those people are ever the most agreeable who listen with seeming curiosity, and who conceal themselves in order to feed the vanity of others. Nor does a true artist force his wit. "A confirmed punster is as great a bore as a patronizing moralist." More-

over, the life of society depends upon the general glow of the party, rather than the prominence of an individual, so that a brilliant talker will seek to bring out "the coincidence which strengthens conviction, or the dissent which sharpens sagacity, rather than individual experiences, which ever seem to be egotistical. In agreeable society all egotism is to be crushed and crucified. Even a man who is an oracle, if wise, will suggest, rather than seem to instruct. In a congenial party all differences in rank are for the time ignored. It is in bad taste to remind or impress people with a sense of their inferiority, as in chivalry all degrees were forgotten in an assemblage of gentlemen." Animated conversation amuses without seeming to teach, and transfers ideas so skilfully into the minds of others that they are ignorant of the debt, and mistake them for their own. It kindles a healthy enthusiasm, promotes good-nature, repels pretension, and rebukes vanity. It even sets off beauty, and intensifies its radiance. Said Madame de la Fayette to Madame de Sévigné: "Your varying expression so brightens and adorns your beauty, that there is nothing so brilliant as yourself: every word you utter adds to the brightness of your eyes; and while it is said that language impresses only the ear, it is quite certain that yours enchants the vision." "Like style in writing," says Lamartine, "conversation must flow

with ease, or it will oppress. It must be clear, or depth of thought cannot be penetrated; simple, or the understanding will be overtasked; restrained, or redundancy will satiate; warm, or it will lack soul; witty, or the brain will not be excited; generous, or sympathy cannot be roused; gentle, or there will be no toleration; persuasive, or the passions cannot be subdued." When it unites these excellences, it has an irresistible power, "musical as was Apollo's lyre;" a perpetual feast of nectared sweets, such as, I fancy, Socrates poured out to Athenian youth, or Augustine in the gardens of Como; an electrical glow, such as united the members of the Turk's Head Club into a band of brothers, or annihilated all distinctions of rank at the supper-table of the poet Scarron.

We cannot easily overrate the influence of those who inspire the social circle. They give not only the greatest pleasure which is known to cultivated minds, but kindle lofty sentiments. They draw men from the whirlpools of folly, break up degrading habits, dissipate the charms of money-making, and raise the value of the soul. How charming, how delightful, how inspiring is the eloquence which is kindled by the attrition of gifted minds! What privilege is greater than to be with those who reveal the experiences of great careers, especially if there be the absence of vanity and ostentation, and encouragement by those whose presence is

safety and whose smiles are an inspiration! It is the blending of the beatitudes of Bethany with the artistic enjoyments of Weimar, causing the favored circle to forget all cares, and giving them strength for those duties which make up the main business of human life.

When woman accomplishes such results she fills no ordinary sphere, she performs no ordinary mission; she rises in dignity as she declines in physical attractions. Like a queen of beauty at the tournament, she bestows the rewards which distinguished excellence has won; she breaks up the distinctions of rank; she rebukes the arrogance of wealth; she destroys pretensions; she kills self-conceit; she even gains consideration for her husband or brother, — for many a stupid man is received into a select circle because of the attractions of his wife or sister, even as many a silly woman gains consideration from the talents or position of her husband or brother. No matter how rich a man may be, if unpolished, ignorant, or rude, he is nobody in a party which seeks "the feast of reason and the flow of soul." He is utterly insignificant, rebuked, and humiliated, — even as a brainless beauty finds herself *de trop* in a circle of wits. Such a man may have consideration in the circle which cannot appreciate anything lofty or refined, but none in those upper regions where art and truth form subjects of discourse, where the æsthetic influences of the heart go forth to purify and exalt, where the soul is

refreshed by the communion of gifted and sympathetic companions, and where that which is most precious and exalted in a man or woman is honored and beloved. Without this influence which woman controls, "a learned man is in danger of becoming a pedant, a religious man a bigot, a vain man a fool, and a self-indulgent man a slave." No man can be truly genial unless he has been taught in the school where his wife, or daughter, or sister, or mother presides as a sun of radiance and beauty It is only in this school that boorish manners are reformed, egotisms rebuked, stupidities punished, and cynicism exorcised.

But this exalting influence cannot exist in society without an attractive power in those ladies who compose it. A crowd of women does not necessarily make society, any more than do the empty, stupid, and noisy receptions which are sometimes held in the houses of the rich, — still less those silly, flippant, ignorant, pretentious, unblushing, and exacting girls who have just escaped from a fashionable school, who elbow their brothers into corners, and cover with confusion their fathers and mothers. A mere assemblage of men and women is nothing without the charms of refinement, vivacity, knowledge, and good-nature. These are not born in a day; they seldom mark people till middle life, when experiences are wide and feelings deep, when flippancy is not mistaken for wit, nor impertinence for

ease. A frivolous slave of dress and ornament can no more belong to the circle of which I now speak, than can a pushing, masculine woman to the sphere which she occasionally usurps. Not dress, not jewelry, not pleasing manners, not even innocence, is the charm and glory of society; but the wisdom learned by experience, the knowledge acquired by study, the quickness based on native genius. When woman has thus acquired these great resources, — by books, by travel, by extended intercourse, and by the soaring of an untrammelled soul, — then only does she shine and guide and inspire, and become, not the equal of man, but his superior, his mentor, his guardian angel, his star of worship, in that favored and glorious realm which is alike the paradise and the empire of the world!

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MADAME DE STAEL

A. D. 1766–1817.

WOMAN IN LITERATURE.

MADAME DE STAËL.

WOMAN IN LITERATURE.

IT was two hundred years after woman began to reign in the great cities of Europe as queen of society, before she astonished the world by brilliant literary successes. Some of the most famous women who adorned society recorded their observations and experiences for the benefit of posterity; but these productions were generally in the form of memoirs and letters, which neither added to nor detracted from the splendid position they occupied because of their high birth, wit, and social fascinations. These earlier favorites were not courted by the great because they could write, but because they could talk, and adorn courts, like Madame de Sévigné. But in the eighteenth century a class of women arose and gained great celebrity on account of their writings, like Hannah More, Miss Burney, Mrs. Macaulay, Madame Dacier, Madame de la Fayette, — women who proved that they could do something more than merely write letters, for which

women ever have been distinguished from the time of Héloïse.

At the head of all these women of genius Madame de Staël stands pre-eminent, not only over literary women, but also over most of the men of letters in her age and country. And it was only a great age which could have produced such a woman, for the eighteenth century was more fruitful in literary genius than is generally supposed. The greatest lights, indeed, no longer shone, — such men as Shakspeare, Bacon, Milton, Corneille, Racine, Boileau, Molière, — but the age was fruitful in great critics, historians, philosophers, economists, poets, and novelists, who won immortal fame, like Pope, Goldsmith, Johnson, Addison, Gibbon, Bentley, Hume, Robertson, Priestley, Burke, Adam Smith, in England; Klopstock, Goethe, Herder, Schiller, Lessing, Handel, Schlegel, Kant, in Germany; and Voltaire, Rousseau, Diderot, Marmontel, D'Alembert, Montesquieu, Rollin, Buffon, Lavoisier, Raynal, Lavater, in France, — all of whom were remarkable men, casting their fearless glance upon all subjects, and agitating the age by their great ideas. In France especially there was a notable literary awakening. A more brilliant circle than ever assembled at the Hôtel de Rambouillet met in the salons of Madame Geoffrin and Madame de Tencin and Madame du Deffand and Madame Necker, to discuss theories of government

political economy, human rights,—in fact, every question which moves the human mind. They were generally irreligious, satirical, and defiant; but they were fresh, enthusiastic, learned, and original. They not only aroused the people to reflection, but they were great artists in language, and made a revolution in style.

It was in this inquiring, brilliant, yet infidel age that the star of Madame de Staël arose, on the eve of the French Revolution. She was born in Paris in 1766, when her father — Necker — was amassing an enormous fortune as a banker and financier, afterwards so celebrated as finance minister to Louis XVI. Her mother, — Susanne Curchod, — of humble Swiss parentage, was yet one of the remarkable women of the day; a lady whom Gibbon would have married had English prejudices and conventionalities permitted, but whose marriage with Necker was both fortunate and happy. They had only one child, but she was a Minerva. It seems that she was of extraordinary precocity, and very early attracted attention. As a mere child Marmontel talked with her as if she were twenty-five. At fifteen, she had written reflections on Montesquieu's "Spirit of Laws," and was solicited by Raynal to furnish an article on the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes. So brilliant a girl was educated by her wealthy parents without regard to expense and

with the greatest care. She was fortunate from the start, with unbounded means, surrounded with illustrious people, and with every opportunity for improvement both as to teachers and society, — doubtless one important cause of her subsequent success, for very few people climb the upper rounds of the ladder of literary fame who are obliged to earn their living; their genius is fettered and their time is employed on irksome drudgeries.

Madame de Staël, when a girl, came very near losing her health and breaking her fine constitution by the unwise "cramming" on which her mother insisted; for, although a superior woman, Madame Necker knew very little about the true system of education, thinking that study and labor should be incessant, and that these alone could do everything. She loaded her daughter with too many restraints, and bound her by a too rigid discipline. She did all she could to crush genius out of the girl, and make her a dictionary, or a machine, or a piece of formality and conventionalism. But the father, wiser, and with greater insight and truer sympathy, relaxed the cords of discipline, unfettered her imagination, connived at her flights of extravagance, and allowed her to develop her faculties in her own way. She had a remarkable fondness for her father, — she adored him, and clung to him through life with peculiar tenderness and devotion, which he appreciated

and repaid. Before she was twenty she wrote poetry as a matter of course. Most girls do,—I mean those who are bright and sentimental; still, she produced out indifferent work, like Cicero when he was young, and soon dropped rhyme forever for the greater freedom of prose, into which she poured from the first all the wealth of her poetic soul. She was a poet, disdaining measure, but exquisite in rhythm,—for nothing can be more musical than her style.

As remarked in the lecture on Madame Récamier, it is seldom that people acquire the art of conversation till middle life, when the mind is enriched and confidence is gained. The great conversational powers of Johnson, Burke, Mackintosh, Coleridge, Wilkes, Garrick, Walpole, Sydney Smith, were most remarkable in their later years, after they had read everything and seen everybody. But Madame de Staël was brilliant in conversation from her youth. She was the delight of every circle, the admiration of the most gifted men,—not for her beauty, for she was not considered beautiful, but for her wit, her vivacity, her repartee, her animated and sympathetic face, her electrical power; for she could kindle, inspire, instruct, or bewitch. She played, she sang, she discoursed on everything,—a priestess, a sibyl, full of inspiration, listened to as an oracle or an idol. "To hear her," says Sismondi, "one would have said that she was the experience of many

souls mingled into one. I looked and listened with transport. I discovered in her features a charm superior to beauty; and if I do not hear her words, yet her tones, her gestures, and her looks convey to me her meaning." It is said that though her features were not beautiful her eyes were remarkable,—large, dark, lustrous, animated, flashing, confiding, and bathed in light. They were truly the windows of her soul; and it was her soul, even more than her intellect, which made her so interesting and so great. I think that intellect without soul is rather repulsive than otherwise, is cold, critical, arrogant, cynical,—something from which we flee, since we find no sympathy and sometimes no toleration from it. The soul of Madame de Staël immeasurably towered above her intellect, great as that was, and gave her eloquence, fervor, sincerity, poetry,—intensified her genius, and made her irresistible.

It was this combination of wit, sympathy, and conversational talent which made Madame de Staël so inordinately fond of society,—to satisfy longings and cravings that neither Nature nor books nor home could fully meet. With all her genius and learning she was a restless woman; and even friendship, for which she had a great capacity, could not bind her, or confine her long to any one place but Paris, which was to her the world,—not for its shops, or fashions, or churches, or

museums and picture-galleries, or historical monuments and memories, but for those coteries where blazed the great wits of the age, among whom she too would shine and dazzle and inspire. She was not without heart, as her warm and lasting friendships attest; but the animating passion of her life was love of admiration, which was only equalled by a craving for sympathy that no friendship could satisfy, — a want of her nature that reveals an ardent soul rather than a great heart; for many a warm-hearted woman can live contentedly in retirement, whether in city or country, — which Madame de Staël could not, not even when surrounded with every luxury and all the charms of nature.

Such a young lady as Mademoiselle Necker — so gifted, so accomplished, so rich, so elevated in social position — could aspire very high. And both her father and mother were ambitious for so remarkable a daughter. But the mother would not consent to her marriage with a Catholic, and she herself insisted on a permanent residence in Paris. It was hard to meet such conditions and yet make a brilliant match; for, after all, her father, though minister, was only a clever and rich Swiss financier, — not a nobleman, or a man of great family influence. The Baron de Staël-Holstein, then secretary to the Swedish embassy, afterwards ambassador from Sweden, was the most available

suitor, since he was a nobleman, a Protestant, and a diplomatist; and Mademoiselle Necker became his wife, in 1786, at twenty years of age, with a dowry of two millions of francs. Her social position was raised by this marriage, since her husband was a favorite at court, and she saw much of the Queen and of the great ladies who surrounded her.

But the marriage was not happy. The husband was extravagant and self-indulgent; the wife panted for beatitudes it was not in his nature to give. So they separated after a while, but were not divorced. Both before and after that event, however, her house was the resort of the best society of the city, and she was its brightest ornament. Thither came Grimm, Talleyrand, Barnave, Lafayette, Narbonne, Sieyès, — all friends. She was an eye-witness to the terrible scenes of the Revolution, and escaped judicial assassination almost by miracle. At last she succeeded in making her escape to Switzerland, and lived a while in her magnificent country-seat near Geneva, surrounded with illustrious exiles. Soon after, she made her first visit to England, but returned to Paris when the violence of the Revolution was over.

She returned the very day that Napoleon, as First Consul, had seized the reins of government, 1799. She had hailed the Revolution with transport, although she was so nearly its victim. She had faith in its ideas

She believed that the people were the ultimate source of power. She condoned the excesses of the Revolution in view of its aspirations. Napoleon gained his first great victories in defence of its ideas. So at first, in common with the friends of liberty, she was prepared to worship this rising sun, dazzled by his deeds and deceived by his lying words. But she no sooner saw him than she was repelled, especially when she knew he had trampled on the liberties which he had professed to defend. Her instincts penetrated through all the plaudits of his idolaters. She felt that he was a traitor to a great cause, — was heartless, unboundedly ambitious, insufferably egotistic, a self-worshipper, who would brush away everything and everybody that stood in his way; and she hated him, and she defied him, and her house became the centre of opposition, the headquarters of enmity and wrath. What was his glory, as a conqueror, compared with the cause she loved, trodden under foot by an iron, rigid, jealous, irresistible despotism? Nor did Napoleon like her any better than she liked him, — not that he was envious, but because she stood in his way. He expected universal homage and devotion, neither of which would she give him. He was exceedingly irritated at the reports of her bitter sayings, blended with ridicule and sarcasm. He was not merely annoyed, he was afraid. "Her arrows," said he, "would hit a man if he were

seated on a rainbow." And when he found he could not silence her, he banished her to within forty leagues of Paris. He was not naturally cruel, but he was not the man to allow so bright a woman to say her sharp things about him to his generals and courtiers. It was not the worst thing he ever did to banish his greatest enemy; but it was mean and cruel to persecute her as he did after she was banished.

So from Paris — to her the "hub of the universe" — Madame de Staël, "with wandering steps and slow, took her solitary way." Expelled from the Eden she loved, she sought to find some place where she could enjoy society, — which was the passion of her life. Weimar, in Germany, then contained a constellation of illustrious men, over whom Goethe reigned, as Dr. Johnson once did in London. Thither she resolved to go, after a brief stay at Coppet, her place in Switzerland; and her ten years' exile began with a sojourn among the brightest intellects of Germany. She was cordially received at Weimar, especially by the Court, although the dictator of German literature did not like her much. She was too impetuous, impulsive, and masculine for him. Schiller and Wieland and Schlegel liked her better, and understood her better. Her great works had not then been written, and she had reputation chiefly for her high social position and social qualities. Possibly her

exceeding vivacity and wit seemed superficial, — as witty French people then seemed to both Germans and English. Doubtless there were critics and philosophers in Germany who were not capable of appreciating a person who aspired to penetrate all the secrets of art, philosophy, religion, and science then known; who tried to master everything, and who talked eloquently on everything, — and that person a woman, and a Frenchwoman. Goethe was indeed an exception to most German critics, for he was an artist, as few Germans have been in the use of language, and he, like Humboldt, had universal knowledge; yet he did not like Madame de Staël, — not from envy: he had too much self-consciousness to be envious of any man, still less a woman. Envy does not exist between the sexes: a musician may be jealous of a musician; a poet, of a poet; a theologian, of a theologian; and it is said, a physician has been known to be jealous of a physician. I think it is probable that the gifted Frenchwoman overwhelmed the great German with her prodigality of wit, sarcasm, and sentiment, for he was inclined to coldness and taciturnity

Madame de Staël speaks respectfully of the great men she met at Weimar; but I do not think she worshipped them, since she did not fully understand them, — especially Fichte, whom she ridiculed, as well as other obscure though profound writers, who disdained

style and art in writing, for which she was afterwards so distinguished. I believe nine-tenths of German literature is wasted on Europeans for lack of clearness and directness of style; although the involved obscurities which are common to German philosophers and critics and historians alike do not seem to derogate from their literary fame at home, and have even found imitators in England, like Coleridge and Carlyle. Nevertheless, obscurity and affectation are eternal blots on literary genius, since they are irreconcilable with art, which alone gives perpetuity to learning, — as illustrated by the classic authors of antiquity, and such men as Pascal, Rousseau, and Macaulay in our times, — although the pedants have always disdained those who write clearly and luminously, and lost reverence for genius the moment it is understood; since clear writing shows how little is truly original, and makes a disquisition on a bug, a comma, or a date seem trivial indeed.

Hitherto, Madame de Staël had reigned in *salons*, rather than on the throne of letters. Until her visit to Germany, she had written but two books which had given her fame, — one, "On Literature, considered in its Relations with Social Institutions," and a novel entitled "Delphine," — neither of which is much read or prized in these times. The leading idea of her book on literature was the perfectibility of human nature. — not

new, since it had been affirmed by Ferguson in England, by Kant in Germany, and by Turgot in France, and even by Roger Bacon in the Middle Ages. But she claimed to be the first to apply perfectibility to literature. If her idea simply means the ever-expanding progress of the human mind, with the aids that Providence has furnished, she is doubtless right. If she means that the necessary condition of human nature, unaided, is towards perfection, she wars with Christianity, and agrees with Rousseau. The idea was fashionable in its day, especially by the disciples of Rousseau, who maintained that the majority could not err. But if Madame de Staël simply meant that society was destined to progressive advancement, as a matter of fact her view will be generally accepted, since God rules this world, and brings good out of evil. Some maintain we have made no advance over ancient India in either morals or literature or science, or over Greece in art, or Rome in jurisprudence; and yet we believe the condition of humanity to-day is superior to what it has been, on the whole, in any previous age of our world. But let us give the credit of this advance to God, and not to man.

Her other book, "Delphine," published in 1802, made a great sensation, like a modern first-class novel, but was severely criticised. Sydney Smith reviewed it in a slashing article. It was considered by many as im-

moral in its tendency, since she was supposed to attack marriage. Sainte-Beuve, the greatest critic of the age, defends her against this charge; but the book was doubtless very emotional, into which she poured all the warmth of her ardent and ungoverned soul in its restless agitation and cravings for sympathy, — a record of herself, blasted in her marriage hopes and aspirations. It is a sort of New Héloïse, and, though powerful, is not healthy. These two works, however, stamped her as a woman of genius, although her highest triumphs were not yet won.

With the éclat of these two books she traversed Germany, studying laws, literature, and manners, assisted in her studies by August v. Schlegel (the translator of Shakspeare), who was tutor to her children, on a salary of twelve thousand francs a year and expenses. She had great admiration for this distinguished scholar, who combined with his linguistic attainments an intense love of art and a profound appreciation of genius, in whatever guise it was to be found. With such a cicerone she could not help making great acquisitions. He was like Jerome explaining to Paula the history of the sacred places; like Dr. Johnson teaching ethics to Hannah More; like Michael Angelo explaining the principles of art to Vittoria Colonna. She mastered the language of which Frederick the Great was ashamed, and, for the first time, did justice to the German

scholars and the German character. She defended the ideal philosophy against Locke and the French materialists; she made a remarkable analysis of Kant; she warmly praised both Goethe and Schiller; she admired Wieland; she had a good word for Fichte, although she had ridiculed his obscurities of style.

The result of her travels was the most masterly dissertation on that great country that has ever been written, — an astonishing book, when we remember it was the first of any note which had appeared of its kind. To me it is more like the history of Herodotus than any book of travels which has appeared since that accomplished scholar traversed Asia and Africa to reveal to his inquisitive countrymen the treasures of Oriental monarchies. In this work, which is intellectually her greatest, she towered not only over all women, but over all men who have since been her competitors. It does not fall in with my purpose to give other than a passing notice of this masterly production in order to show what a marvellous woman she was, not in the realm of sentiment alone, not as a writer of letters, but as a critic capable of grasping and explaining all that philosophy, art, and literature have sought to accomplish in that *terra incognita*, as Germany was then regarded. She revealed a new country to the rest of Europe; she described with accuracy its manners and customs; she did justice to the

German intellect; she showed what amazing scholarship already existed in the universities, far surpassing both Paris and Oxford. She appreciated the German character, its simplicity, its truthfulness, its sincerity, its intellectual boldness, its patience, its reserved power, afterwards to be developed in war, — qualities and attainments which have since raised Germany to the foremost rank among the European nations.

This brilliant Frenchwoman, accustomed to reign in the most cultivated social circles of Paris, shows a remarkable catholicity and breadth of judgment, and is not shocked at phlegmatic dulness or hyperborean awkwardness, or laughable simplicity; because she sees, what nobody else then saw, a patience which never wearies, a quiet enthusiasm which no difficulty or disgust destroys, and a great insight which can give richness to literature without art, discrimination to philosophy without conciseness, and a new meaning to old dogmas. She ventures to pluck from the forbidden tree of metaphysics; and, reckless of the fiats of the schools, she entered fearlessly into those inquiries which have appalled both Greek and schoolman. Think of a woman making the best translation and criticism of Kant which had appeared until her day! Her revelations might have found more value in the eyes of pedants had she been more obscure. But, as Sir James Mackintosh says, "Dullness is not

accuracy, nor is an elegant writer necessarily superficial." Divest German metaphysics of their obscurities, and they might seem commonplace; take away the clearness of French writers, and they might pass for profound. Clearness and precision, however, are not what the world expects from its teachers. It loves the fig-trees with nothing but leaves; it adores the *stat magni nominis umbra*. The highest proof of severe culture is the use of short and simple words on any subject whatever; and he who cannot make his readers understand what he writes about does not understand his subject himself.

I am happy to have these views corroborated by one of the best writers that this country has produced, — I mean William Matthews: —

"The French, who if not the most original are certainly the acutest and most logical thinkers in the world, are frequently considered frivolous and shallow, simply because they excel all other nations in the difficult art of giving literary interest to philosophy; while, on the other hand, the ponderous Germans, who living in clouds of smoke have a positive genius for making the obscure obscurer, are thought to be original, because they are so chaotic and clumsy. But we have yet to learn that lead is priceless because it is weighty, or that gold is valueless because it glitters. The Damascus blade is none the less keen because it is polished, nor the Corinthian shaft less strong because it is fluted and its capital curved."

The production of such a woman, in that age, in which there is so much learning combined with eloquence, and elevation of sentiment with acute observation, and the graces of style with the spirit of philosophy, — candid, yet eulogistic; discriminating, yet enthusiastic, — made a great impression on the mind of cultivated Europe. Napoleon however, with inexcusable but characteristic meanness, would not allow its publication. The police seized the whole edition — ten thousand — and destroyed every copy. They even tried to get possession of the original copy, which required the greatest tact on the part of the author to preserve, and which she carried with her on all her travels, for six years, until it was finally printed in London.

Long before this great work was completed, — for she worked upon it six years, — Madame de Staël visited, with Sismondi, that country which above all others is dear to the poet, the artist, and the antiquarian She entered that classic and hallowed land amid the glories of a southern spring, when the balmy air, the beautiful sky, the fresh verdure of the fields, and the singing of the birds added fascination to scenes which without them would have been enchantment. Châteaubriand, the only French writer of her day with whom she stood in proud equality, also visited Italy, but sang another song: she, bright and radiant

with hope and cheerfulness, an admirer of the people and the country as they were; he, mournful and desponding, yet not less poetic, with visions of departed glory which the vast débris of the ancient magnificence suggested to his pensive soul. O Italy, Italy! land of associations, whose history never tires; whose antiquities are perpetual studies; whose works of art provoke to hopeless imitation; whose struggles until recently were equally chivalric and unfortunate; whose aspirations have ever been with liberty, yet whose destiny has been successive slaveries; whose hills and plains and vales are verdant with perennial loveliness, though covered with broken monuments and deserted cities; where monks and beggars are more numerous than even scholars and artists,—glory in debasement, and debasement in glory, reminding us of the greatness and misery of man; alike the paradise and the prison of the world; the Minerva and the Niobe of nations,—never shall thy wonders be exhausted or thy sorrows be forgotten!

> "E'en in thy desert what is like to thee?
> Thy very weeds are beautiful; thy wastes
> More rich than other lands' fertility;
> Thy wreck a glory, and thy ruin grand."

In this unfortunate yet illustrious land, ever fresh to travellers, ever to be hallowed in spite of revolutions and assassinations, of popes and priests, of semi-infidel

artists and cynical savants, of beggars and tramps, of filthy hotels and dilapidated villas, Madame de Staël lingered more than a year, visiting every city which has a history and every monument which has antiquity; and the result of that journey was "Corinne," — one of the few immortal books which the heart of the world cherishes; which is as fresh to-day as it was nearly one hundred years ago, — a novel, a critique, a painting, a poem, a tragedy; interesting to the philosopher in his study and to the woman in her boudoir, since it is the record of the cravings of a great soul, and a description of what is most beautiful or venerated in nature or art. It is the most wonderful book ever written of Italy, — with faults, of course, but a transcript of profound sorrows and lofty aspirations. To some it may seem exaggerated in its transports; but can transports be too highly colored? Can any words be as vivid as a sensation? Enthusiasm, when fully expressed, ceases to be a rapture; and the soul that fancies it has reached the heights of love or beauty or truth, claims to comprehend the immortal and the infinite.

It is the effort of genius to express the raptures and sorrows of a lofty but unsatisfied soul, the glories of the imperishable in art and life, which gives to "Corinne" its peculiar charm. It is the mirror of a wide and deep experience, — a sort of "Divine Comedy," in which

a Dante finds a Beatrice, not robed in celestial loveliness, coursing from circle to circle and star to star, explaining the mysteries of heaven, but radiant in the beauty of earth, and glowing with the ardor of a human love. Every page is masculine in power, every sentence is condensed thought, every line burns with passion; yet every sentiment betrays the woman, seeking to reveal her own boundless capacities of admiration and friendship, to be appreciated, to be loved with that fervor and disinterestedness which she was prepared to lavish on the object of her adoration. No man could have made such revelations, although it may be given to him to sing a greater song. While no woman could have composed the "Iliad," or the "Novum Organum," or the "Critique of Pure Reason," or "Othello," no man could have written "Corinne" or "Adam Bede."

In painting Corinne, Madame de Staël simply describes herself, as she did in "Delphine," with all her restless soul-agitations; yet not in too flattering colors, since I doubt if there ever lived a more impassioned soul, with greater desires of knowledge, or a more devouring thirst for fame, or a profounder insight into what is lofty and eternal, than the author of "Corinne." Like Héloïse, she could love but one; yet, unlike Héloïse, she could not renounce, even for love, the passion for admiration or the fascinations of society.

She does not attempt to disguise the immense sacrifices which love exacts and marriage implies, but which such a woman as Héloïse is proud to make for him whom she deems worthy of her own exalted sentiments; and she shows in the person of Corinne how much weakness may coexist with strength, and how timid and dependent is a woman even in the blaze of triumph and in the enjoyment of a haughty freedom. She paints the most shrinking delicacy with the greatest imprudence and boldness, contempt for the opinions and usages of society with the severest self-respect; giving occasion for scandal, yet escaping from its shafts; triumphant in the greatness of her own dignity and in the purity of her unsullied soul. "Corinne" is a disguised sarcasm on the usages of society among the upper classes in Madame de Staël's day, when a man like Lord Neville is represented as capable of the most exalted passion, and almost ready to die for its object, and at the same time is unwilling to follow its promptings to an honorable issue, — ready even, at last, to marry a woman for whom he feels no strong attachment, or even admiration, in compliance with expediency, pride, and family interests.

But "Corinne" is not so much a romance as it is a description of Italy itself, its pictures, its statues, its palaces, its churches, its antiquities, its literature, its manners, and its aspirations; and it is astonishing how

much is condensed in that little book. The author has forestalled all poets and travellers, and even guide-books; all successive works are repetitions or amplifications of what she has suggested. She is as exhaustive and condensed as Thucydides; and, true to her philosophy, she is all sunshine and hope, with unbounded faith in the future of Italy, — an exultant prophet as well as a critical observer.

This work was published in Paris in 1807, when Napoleon was on the apex of his power and glory; and no work by a woman was ever hailed with greater enthusiasm, not in Paris merely, but throughout Europe. Yet nothing could melt the iron heart of Napoleon, and he continued his implacable persecution of its author, so that she was obliged to continue her travels, though travelling like a princess. Again she visited Germany, and again she retired to her place near Geneva, where she held a sort of court, the star of which, next to herself, was Madame Récamier, whose transcendent beauty and equally transcendent loveliness of character won her admiration and friendship.

In 1810 Madame de Staël married Rocca, of Italian or Spanish origin, who was a sickly and dilapidated officer in the French army, little more than half her age, — he being twenty-five and she forty-five, — a strange marriage, almost incredible, if such marriages were not frequent. He, though feeble, was an accom-

plished man, and was taken captive by the brilliancy of her talk and the elevation of her soul. It is harder to tell what captured her, for who can explain the mysteries of love? The marriage proved happy, however, although both parties dreaded ridicule, and kept it secret. The romance of the thing — if romance there was — has been equalled in our day by the marriages of George Eliot and Miss Burdett Coutts. Only very strong characters can afford to run such risks. The caprices of the great are among the unsolved mysteries of life. A poor, wounded, unknown young man would never have aspired to such an audacity had he not been sure of his ground; and the probability is that she, not he, is to be blamed for that folly, — if a woman is to be blamed for an attachment which the world calls an absurdity.

The wrath of Napoleon waxing stronger and stronger, Madame de Staël felt obliged to flee even from Switzerland. She sought a rest in England; but England was hard to be reached, as all the Continent save Russia was in bondage and fear. She succeeded in reaching Vienna, then Russia, and finally Sweden, where she lingered, as it was the fashion, to receive attentions and admiration from all who were great in position or eminent for attainments in the northern capitals of Europe. She liked even Russia; she saw good everywhere, something to praise and enjoy wherever she went. Moscow and

St. Petersburg were equally interesting,—the old and the new, the Oriental magnificence of the one, the stupendous palaces and churches of the other. Romanzoff, Orloff, the Empress Elizabeth, and the Emperor Alexander himself gave her distinguished honors and hospitalities, and she saw and recorded their greatness, and abandoned herself to pleasures which were new.

After a delightful winter in Stockholm, she sailed for England, where she arrived in safety, 1813, twenty years after her first visit, and in the ninth of her exile. Her reception in the highest circles was enthusiastic. She was recognized as the greatest literary woman who had lived. The Prince Regent sought her acquaintance; the greatest nobles fêted her in their princely palaces. At the house of the Marquis of Lansdowne, at Lord Jersey's, at Rogers's literary dinners, at the reunions of Holland House, everywhere she was admired and honored. Sir James Mackintosh, the idol and oracle of English society at that time, pronounced her the most intellectual woman who had adorned the world,—not as a novelist and poet merely, but as philosopher and critic, grappling with the highest questions that ever tasked the intellect of man. Byron alone stood aloof; he did not like strong-minded women, any more than Goethe did, especially if they were not beautiful. But he was constrained to admire her at last. Nobody could re-

sist the fascination and brilliancy of her conversation. It is to be regretted that she did not write a book on England, which on the whole she admired, although it was a little too conventional for her. But she was now nearly worn out by the excitements and the sorrows of her life. She was no longer young. Her literary work was done. And she had to resort to opium to rally from the exhaustion of her nervous energies.

On the fall of Napoleon, Madame de Staël returned to Paris, — the city she loved so well; the city so dear to all Frenchmen and to all foreigners, to all gay people, to all intellectual people, to all fashionable people, to all worldly people, to all pious people, — to them the centre of modern civilization. Exile from this city has ever been regarded as a great calamity, — as great as exile was to Romans, even to Cicero. See with what eagerness Thiers himself returned to this charmed capital when permitted by the last Napoleon! In this city, after her ten years' exile, Madame de Staël reigned in prouder state than at any previous period of her life She was now at home, on her own throne as queen of letters, and also queen of society. All the great men who were then assembled in Paris burned their incense before her, — Châteaubriand, Lafayette, Talleyrand, Guizot, Constant, Cuvier, Laplace. Distinguished foreigners

swelled the circle of her admirers,—Blücher, Humboldt, Schlegel, Canova, Wellington, even the Emperor of Russia. The Restoration hailed her with transport; Louis XVIII. sought the glory of her talk; the press implored her assistance; the salons caught inspiration from her presence. Never was woman seated on a prouder throne. But she did not live long to enjoy her unparalleled social honors. She was stifled, like Voltaire, by the incense of idolaters; the body could no longer stand the strain of the soul, and she sunk, at the age of fifty-one, in the year 1817, a few months before her husband Rocca, whom, it appears, she ever tenderly loved.

Madame de Staël died prematurely, as precocious people generally do,—like Raphael, Pascal, Schiller, I may add Macaulay and Mill; but she accomplished much, and might have done more had her life been spared, for no one doubts her genius,—perhaps the most remarkable female writer who has lived, on the whole. George Sand is the only Frenchwoman who has approached her in genius and fame. Madame de Staël was novelist, critic, essayist, and philosopher, grasping the profoundest subjects, and gaining admiration in everything she attempted. I do not regard her as pre-eminently a happy woman, since her marriages were either unfortunate or unnatural. In the intoxicating blaze of triumph and admiration she panted for

domestic beatitudes, and found the earnest cravings of her soul unsatisfied. She sought relief from herself in society, which was a necessity to her, as much as friendship or love; but she was restless, and perpetually travelling. Moreover, she was a persecuted woman during the best ten years of her life. She had but little repose of mind or character, and was worldly, vain, and ambitious. But she was a great woman and a good woman, in spite of her faults and errors; and greater in her womanly qualities than she was in her writings, remarkable as these were. She had a great individuality, like Dr. Johnson and Thomas Carlyle And she lives in the hearts of her countrymen, like Madame Récamier; for it was not the beauty and grace of this queen of society which made her beloved, but her good-nature, amiability, power of friendship, freedom from envy, and generous soul.

In the estimation of foreigners — of those great critics of whom Jeffrey and Mackintosh were the representatives — Madame de Staël has won the proud fame of being the most powerful writer her country has produced since Voltaire and Rousseau. Historically she is memorable for inaugurating a new period of literary history. With her began a new class of female authors, whose genius was no longer confined to letters and memoirs and sentimental novels. I need not enumerate the long catalogue of

illustrious literary women in the nineteenth century in France, in Germany, in England, and even in the United States. The greatest novelist in England, since Thackeray, was a woman. One of the greatest writers on political economy, since Adam Smith, was a woman. One of the greatest writers in astronomical science was a woman. In America, what single novel ever equalled the success of "Uncle Tom's Cabin"? What schools are better kept than those by women? And this is only the beginning, since it is generally felt that women are better educated than men, outside of the great professions. And why not, since they have more leisure for literary pursuits than men? Who now sneers at the intellect of a woman? Who laughs at blue-stockings? Who denies the insight, the superior tact, the genius of woman? What man does not accept woman as a fellow-laborer in the field of letters? And yet there is one profession which they are more capable of filling than men,—that of physicians to their own sex; a profession most honorable, and requiring great knowledge, as well as great experience and insight.

Why may not women cope with men in the proudest intellectual tournaments? Why should they not become great linguists, and poets, and novelists, and artists, and critics, and historians? Have they not quickness, brilliancy, sentiment, acuteness of observation, good sense, and even genius? Do not well-

educated women speak French before their brothers can translate the easiest lines of Virgil? I would not put such gentle, refined, and cultivated creatures, — these flowers of Paradise, spreading the sweet aroma of their graces in the calm retreats from toil and sin, — I would not push them into the noisy arena of wrangling politics, into the suffocating and impure air of a court of justice, or even make them professors in a college of unruly boys; but because I would not do them this great cruelty, do I deny their intellectual equality, or seek to dim the lustre of the light they shed, or hide their talents under the vile bushel of envy, cynicism, or contempt? Is it paying true respect to woman to seek to draw her from the beautiful sphere which she adorns and vivifies and inspires, — where she is a solace, a rest, a restraint, and a benediction, — and require of her labors which she has not the physical strength to perform? And when it is seen how much more attractive the wives and daughters of favored classes have made themselves by culture, how much more capable they are of training and educating their children, how much more dignified the family circle may thus become, — every man who is a father will rejoice in this great step which women have recently made, not merely in literary attainments, but in the respect of men. Take away intellect from woman and what is she but a toy or a slave? For

my part, I see no more cheering signs of the progress of society than in the advancing knowledge of favored women. And I know of no more splendid future for them than to encircle their brows, whenever they have an opportunity, with those proud laurels which have ever been accorded to those who have advanced the interests of truth and the dominion of the soul,—which laurels they have lately won, and which both reason and experience assure us they may continue indefinitely to win.

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HANNAH MORE.

A. D. 1745-1833.

EDUCATION OF WOMAN.

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ONE of the useful and grateful tasks of historians and biographers is to bring forward to the eye of every new generation of men and women those illustrious characters who made a great figure in the days of their grandfathers and grandmothers, yet who have nearly faded out of sight in the rush of new events and interests, and the rise of new stars in the intellectual firmament. Extraordinary genius or virtue or services may be forgotten for a while, but are never permanently hidden. There is always somebody to recall them to our minds, whether the interval be short or long. The Italian historian Vico wrote a book which attracted no attention for nearly two hundred years, — in fact, was forgotten, — but was made famous by the discoveries of Niebuhr in the Vatican library, and became the foundation of modern philosophical history. Some great men pass out of view for a generation or two owing to the bitterness of contem-

poraneous enemies and detractors, and others because of the very unanimity of admirers and critics, leading to no opposition. We weary both of praise and censure. And when either praise or censure stops, the object of it is apparently forgotten for a time, except by the few who are learned. Yet, I repeat, real greatness or goodness is never completely hidden. It reappears with new lustre when brought into comparison with those who are embarked in the same cause.

Thus the recent discussions on the education of women recall to our remembrance the greatest woman who lived in England in the latter part of the last century, — Hannah More, — who devoted her long and prosperous and honorable life to this cause both by practical teaching and by writings which arrested the attention and called forth the admiration of the best people in Europe and America. She forestalled nearly everything which has been written in our times pertaining to the life of woman, both at school and in society. And she evinced in her writings on this great subject an acuteness of observation, a good sense, a breadth and catholicity of judgment, a richness of experience, and a high moral tone which have never been surpassed. She reminds us of the wise Madame de Maintenon in her school at St. Cyr; the pious and philanthropic Mary Lyon at the Mount Holyoke Seminary; and the more superficial and worldly, but truly benevolent and

practical, Emma Willard at her institution in Troy,— the last two mentioned ladies being the pioneers of the advanced education for young ladies in such colleges as Vassar, Wellesley, and Smith, and others I could mention. The wisdom, tact, and experience of Madame de Maintenon — the first great woman who gave a marked impulse to female education in our modern times — were not lost on Hannah More, who seems to have laid down the laws best adapted to develop the mind and character of woman under a high civilization. England seems to have been a century in advance of America, both in its wisdom and folly; and the same things in London life were ridiculed and condemned with unsparing boldness by Hannah More which to-day, in New York, have called out the vigorous protests of Dr. Morgan Dix. The educators of our age and country cannot do better than learn wisdom from the "Strictures on the Modern System of Female Education," as well as the "Thoughts on the Manners of the Great," which appeared from the pen of Hannah More in the latter part of the 18th century, in which she appears as both moralist and teacher, getting inspiration not only from her exalted labors, but from the friendship and conversation of the great intellectual oracles of her age. I have not read of any one woman in England for the last fifty years, I have not heard or known of any one woman in the United States, who ever occupied the

exalted position of Hannah More, or who exercised so broad and deep an influence on the public mind in the combined character of a woman of society, author, and philanthropist. There have been, since her day, more brilliant queens of fashion, greater literary geniuses, and more prominent philanthropists; but she was enabled to exercise an influence superior to any of them, by her friendship with people of rank, by her clear and powerful writings, and by her lofty piety and morality, which blazed amid the vices of fashionable society one hundred years ago.

It is well to dwell on the life and labors of so great and good a woman, who has now become historical. But I select her especially as the representative of the grandest moral movement of modern times, — that which aims to develop the mind and soul of woman, and give to her the dignity of which she has been robbed by paganism and "philistinism." I might have selected some great woman nearer home and our own time, more intimately connected with the profession of educating young ladies; but I prefer to speak of one who is universally conceded to have rendered great service to her age and country. It is doubly pleasant to present Hannah More, because she had none of those defects and blemishes which have often detracted from the dignity of great benefactors. She was about as perfect a woman as I have read of; and her virtues

were not carried out to those extremes of fanaticism which have often marked illustrious saints, from the want of common-sense or because of visionary theories. Strict and consistent as a moralist, she was never led into any extravagances or fanaticisms. Stern even as a disciplinarian, she did not proscribe healthy and natural amusements. Strong-minded, — if I may use a modern contemptuous phrase, — she never rebelled against the ordinances of nature or the laws dictated by inspiration. She was a model woman: beautiful, yet not vain; witty, yet never irreverent; independent, yet respectful to authority; exercising private judgment, yet admired by bishops; learned, without pedantry; hospitable, without extravagance; fond of the society of the great, yet spending her life among the poor; alive to the fascinations of society, yet consecrating all her energies of mind and body to the good of those with whom she was brought in contact; as capable of friendship as Paula, as religious as Madame Guyon, as charming in conversation as Récamier, as practical as Elizabeth, as broad and tolerant as Fénelon, who was himself half woman in his nature, as the most interesting men of genius are apt to be. Nothing cynical, or bitter, or extravagant, or contemptuous appears in any of her writings, most of which were published anonymously, — from humility as well as sensitiveness. Vanity was a stranger to her, as well as arrogance and pride. Embarking in

great enterprises, she never went outside the prescribed sphere of woman. Masculine in the force and vigor of her understanding, she was feminine in all her instincts, — proper, amiable, and gentle; a woman whom everybody loved and everybody respected, even to kings and queens.

Hannah More was born in a little village near Bristol, 1745, and her father was the village schoolmaster. He had been well educated, and had large expectations; but he was disappointed, and was obliged to resort to this useful but irksome way of getting a living. He had five daughters, of whom Hannah was the fourth. As a girl, she was very precocious in mind, as well as beautiful and attractive in her person. She studied Latin when only eight years of age. Her father, it would seem, was a very sensible man, and sought to develop the peculiar talents which each of his daughters possessed, without the usual partiality of parents, who are apt to mistake inclination for genius. Three of the girls had an aptitude for teaching, and opened a boarding-school in Bristol when the oldest was only twenty. The school was a great success, and soon became fashionable, and ultimately famous. To this school the early labors of Hannah More were devoted; and she soon attracted attention by her accomplishments, especially in the modern languages, in which she conversed with great accuracy and facility. But her talents were more re-

markable than her accomplishments; and eminent men sought her society and friendship. who in turn introduced her to their own circle of friends, by all of whom she was admired. Thus she gradually came to know the celebrated Dean Tucker of Gloucester cathedral; Ferguson the astronomer, then lecturing at Bristol; the elder Sheridan, also giving lectures on oratory in the same city; Garrick, on the eve of his retirement from the stage; Dr. Johnson, Goldsmith, Reynolds, Mrs. Montagu, in whose *salon* the most distinguished men of the age assembled as the headquarters of fashionable society, — Edmund Burke, then member for Bristol in the House of Commons; Gibbon; Alderman Cadell, the great publisher; Bishop Porteus; Rev. John Newton; and Sir James Stonehouse, an eminent physician. With all these stars she was on intimate terms, visiting them at their houses, received by them all as more than an equal, — for she was not only beautiful and witty, but had earned considerable reputation for her poetry. Garrick particularly admired her as a woman of genius, and performed one of her plays ("Percy") twenty successive nights at Drury Lane, writing himself both the prologue and the epilogue. It must be borne in mind that when first admitted to the choicest society of London, — at the houses not merely of literary men, but of great statesmen and nobles like Lord Camden, Lord Spencer, the Duke of Newcastle, Lord Pembroke

Lord Granville, and others, — she was teaching in a girls' school at Bristol, and was a young lady under thirty years of age.

It was as a literary woman — when literary women were not so numerous or ambitious as they now are — that Hannah More had the *entrée* into the best society under the patronage of the greatest writers of the age She was a literary lion before she was twenty-five. She attracted the attention of Sheridan by her verses when she was scarcely eighteen. Her "Search after Happiness" went through six editions before the year 1775. Her tragedy of "Percy" was translated into French and German before she was thirty; and she realized from the sale of it £600. "The Fatal Falsehood" was also much admired, but did not meet the same success, being cruelly attacked by envious rivals. Her "Bas Bleu" was praised by Johnson in unmeasured terms. It was for her poetry that she was best known from 1775 to 1785, the period when she lived in the fashionable and literary world, and which she adorned by her wit and brilliant conversation, — not exactly a queen of society, since she did not set up a *salon*, but was only an honored visitor at the houses of the great; a brilliant and beautiful woman, whom everybody wished to know.

I will not attempt any criticism on those numerous poems. They are not much read and valued in our

time. They are all after the style of Johnson and Pope — the measured and artificial style of the eighteenth century, in imitation of the ancient classics and of French poetry, in which the wearisome rhyme is the chief peculiarity, — smooth, polished, elaborate, but pretty much after the same pattern, and easily imitated by school-girls. The taste of this age — created by Burns, Byron, Wordsworth, Browning, Tennyson, Longfellow, and others — is very different. But the poems of Hannah More were undoubtedly admired by her generation, and gave her great *éclat* and considerable pecuniary emolument. And yet her real fame does not rest on those artificial poems, respectable as they were one hundred years ago, but on her writings as a moralist and educator.

During this period of her life — from 1775 to 1785 — she chiefly resided with her sisters in Bristol, but made long visits to London, and to the houses of famous or titled personages. In a worldly point of view these years were the most brilliant, but not most useful, period of her life. At first she was intoxicated by the magnificent attentions she received, and had an intense enjoyment of cultivated society. It was in these years she formed the most ardent friendships of her life. Of all her friends, she seems to have been most attached to Garrick, — the idol of society, a general favorite wherever he chose to go, a man of irreproachable

morals and charming conversational powers; at whose house and table no actor or actress was ever known to be invited, except in one solitary instance; from which it would appear that he was more desirous of the attentions of the great than of the sympathy and admiration of the people of his own profession. It is not common for actors to be gifted with great conversational powers any more than for artists, as a general thing, to be well-read people, especially in history Hannah More was exceedingly intimate with both Garrick and his wife; and his death, in 1779, saddened and softened his great worshipper. After his death she never was present at any theatrical amusement. She would not go to the theatre to witness the acting of her own dramas; not even to see Mrs. Siddons, when she appeared as so brilliant a star. In fact, after Garrick's death Miss More partially abandoned fashionable society, having acquired a disgust of its heartless frivolities and seductive vices.

With the death of Garrick a new era opened in the life of Hannah More, although for the succeeding five years she still was a frequent visitor in the houses of those she esteemed, both literary lions and people of rank. It would seem, during this period, that Dr. Johnson was her warmest friend, whom she ever respected for his lofty moral nature, and before whom she bowed down in humble worship as an intellectual

dictator. He called her his child. Sometimes he was severe on her, when she differed from him in opinion, or when caught praising books which he, as a moralist, abhorred, — like the novels of Fielding and Smollet; for the only novelist he could tolerate was Richardson. Once when she warmly expatiated in praise of the Jansenists, the overbearing autocrat exclaimed in a voice of thunder: "Madam, let me hear no more of this! Don't quote your popish authorities to me; I want none of your popery!" But seeing that his friend was overwhelmed with the shock he gave her, his countenance instantly changed; his lip quivered, and his eyes filled with tears. He gently took her hand, and with the deepest emotion exclaimed: "Child, never mind what I have said, — follow true piety wherever you find it." This anecdote is a key to the whole character of Johnson, interesting and uninteresting; for this rough, tyrannical dogmatist was also one of the tenderest of men, and had a soul as impressible as that of a woman.

The most intimate woman friend, it would seem, that Hannah ever had was Mrs. Garrick, both before and after the death of her husband; and the wife of Garrick was a Roman Catholic. Hannah More usually spent several months with this accomplished and warm-hearted woman at her house in Hampton, generally from March to July. This was often her home

during the London season, after which she resided in Bristol with her sisters, who made a fortune by their boarding-school. After Hannah had entered into the literary field she supported herself by her writings, which until 1785 were chiefly poems and dramas, — now almost forgotten, but which were widely circulated and admired in her day, and by which she kept her position in fashionable and learned society. After the death of Garrick, as we have said, she seemed to have acquired a disgust of the gay and fashionable society which at one time was so fascinating. She found it frivolous, vain, and even dull. She craved sympathy and intellectual conversation and knowledge. She found neither at a fashionable party, only outside show, gay dresses, and unspeakable follies, — no conversation; for how could there be either the cultivation of friendship or conversation in a crowd, perchance, of empty people for the most part? "As to London," says she, "I shall be glad to get out of it; everything is great and vast and late and magnificent and dull. I very seldom go to these parties, and I always repent when I do. My distaste of these scenes of insipid magnificence I have not words to tell. Every faculty but the sight is starved, and that has a surfeit. I like conversation parties of the right sort, whether of four persons or forty; but it is impossible to talk when two or three hundred people are con-

tinually coming in and popping out, or nailing themselves to a card table. Conceive," said she, "of the insipidity of two or three hundred people, — all dressed in the extremity of fashion, painted as red as bacchanals, poisoning the air with perfumes, treading on each other's dresses, not one in ten able to get a chair when fainting with weariness. I never now go to these things when I can possibly avoid it, and stay when there as few minutes as I can." Thus she wrote as early as 1782. She went through the same experience as did Madame Récamier, learning to prefer a small and select circle, where conversation was the chief charm, especially when this circle was composed only of gifted men and women. In this incipient disgust of gay and worldly society — chiefly because it improved neither her mind nor her morals, because it was stupid and dull, as it generally is to people of real culture and high intelligence — she seems to have been gradually drawn to the learned prelates of the English Church, — like Dr. Porteus, Bishop of Chester, afterwards of London; the Bishop of St. Asaph; and Dr. Horne, then Dean of Canterbury. She became very intimate with Wilberforce and Rev. John Newton, while she did not give up her friendship for Horace Walpole, Pepys, and other lights of the social world.

About this time (1785) she retired to Cowslip Green,

a pretty cottage ten miles from Bristol, and spent her time in reading, writing, and gardening. The country, with its green pastures and still waters, called her back to those studies and duties which are most ennobling, and which produce the most lasting pleasure. In this humble retreat she had many visitors from among her illustrious friends. She became more and more religious, without entirely giving up society; corresponding with the eminent men and women she visited, especially Mrs. Montagu, Dr. Porteus, Mrs. Boscawen, Mr. Pepys, and Rev. John Newton. In the charming seclusion of Cowslip Green she wrote her treatise on the "Manners of the Great;" the first of that series in which she rebuked the fashions and follies of the day. It had an immense circulation, and was published anonymously. This very popular work was followed, in 1790, by a volume on an "Estimate of the Religion of the Fashionable World," which produced a still deeper sensation among the great, and was much admired. The Bishop of London (Porteus) was full of its praises; so was John Newton, although he did not think that any book could wean the worldly from their pleasures.

Thus far most of the associations of Hannah More had been with the fashionable world, by which she was petted and flattered. Seeing clearly its faults, she had sought to reform it by her writings and by

her conversation. But now she turned her attention to another class, — the poor and ignorant, — and labored for them. She instituted a number of schools for the poor in her immediate neighborhood, superintended them, raised money for them, and directed them, as Madame de Maintenon did the school of St. Cyr; only with this difference, — that while the Frenchwoman sought to develop the mind and character of a set of aristocratic girls to offset the practical infidelity that permeated the upper walks of life, Hannah More desired to make the children of the poor religious amid the savage profligacy which then marked the peasant class. The first school she established was at Cheddar, a wild and sunless hollow, amid yawning caverns, about ten miles from Cowslip Green, — the resort of pleasure parties for its picturesque cliffs and fissures. Around this weird spot was perhaps the most degraded peasantry to be found in England, without even spiritual instruction, — for the vicar was a non-resident, and his living was worth but £50 a year. In her efforts to establish a school in such a barbarous and pagan locality Hannah met with serious obstacles. The farmers and petty landholders were hostile to her scheme, maintaining that any education would spoil the poor, and make them discontented. Even the farmers themselves were an ignorant and brutal class, very depraved, and with

intense prejudices. For a whole year she labored with them to disarm their hostilities and prejudices, and succeeded at last in collecting two hundred and fifty children in the schoolhouse which she had built. Their instruction was of course only elemental, but it was religious.

From Cheddar, Hannah More was led to examine into the condition of neighboring places. Thirteen contiguous parishes were without a resident curate, and nine of these were furnished with schools, with over five hundred scholars. Her theory was, — a suitable education for each, and a Christian education for all. While she was much encouraged by her ecclesiastical aristocratic friends, she still encountered great opposition from the farmers. She also excited the jealousy of the Dissenters for thus invading the territory of ignorance. All her movements were subjected to prelates and clergymen of the Church of England for their approval; for she put herself under their patronage. And yet the brutal ignorance of the peasantry was owing in part to the neglect of these very clergymen, who never visited these poor people under their charge. As an excuse for them, it may be said that at that time there were 4,809 parishes in England and Wales in which a clergyman could not reside, if he would, for lack of a parsonage. At that time, even in Puritan New England, every minister

was supposed to live in a parsonage. To-day, not one parish in ten is provided with that desirable auxiliary.

Not only were the labors of Hannah More extended to the ignorant and degraded by the establishment of schools in her neighborhood, at an expense of about £1,000 a year, part of which she contributed herself, but she employed her pen in their behalf, writing, at the solicitation of the Bishop of London, a series of papers or tracts for the times, with special reference to the enlightenment of the lower classes on those subjects that were then agitating the country. The whole land was at this time inundated with pamphlets full of infidelity and discontent, fanned by the French Revolution, then passing through its worst stages of cruelty, atheism, and spoliation. Burke about the same time wrote his "Reflections," which are immortal for their wisdom and profundity; but he wrote for the upper classes, not merely in England, but in America and on the continent of Europe. Hannah More wrote for the lower classes, and in a style of great clearness and simplicity. Her admirable dialogue, called "Village Politics," by Will Chip, a country carpenter, exposed the folly and atrocity of the revolutionary doctrines then in vogue. Its circulation was immense. The Government purchased several thousand copies for distribution. It was translated into French and Italian

Similar in spirit was the tract in reply to the infidel speech of M. Dupont in the French Convention, in which he would divorce all religion from education. The circulation of this tract was also very great. These were followed, in 1795, by the "Cheap Repository," a periodical designed for the poor, with religious tales, most of which have since been published by Tract Societies, among them the famous story of "The Shepherd of Salisbury Plain." The "Cheap Repository" was continued for three years, and circulated in every village and hamlet of England and America. It almost equalled the popularity of the "Pilgrim's Progress." Two millions of these tracts were sold in the first year.

In 1799 Hannah More's great work entitled "Strictures on the Modern System of Female Education" appeared, which passed through twenty editions in a few years. It was her third ethical publication in prose, and the most powerful of all her writings. Testimonies as to its value poured in upon her from every quarter. Nothing was more talked about at that time except, perhaps, Robert Hall's "Sermons." It was regarded as one of the most perfect works of its kind that any country or age had produced. It made as deep an impression on the English mind as the "Émile" of Rousseau did on the French half a century earlier, but was vastly higher in its moral tone. I know of no

treatise on education so full and so sensible as this. It ought to be reprinted, for the benefit of this generation, for its author has forestalled all subsequent writers on this all-important subject. There is scarcely anything said by Rev. Morgan Dix, in his excellent Lenten Lectures, which was not said by Hannah More in the last century. Herbert Spencer may be more original, possibly more profound, but he is not so practical or clear or instructive as the great woman who preceded him more than half a century.

The fundamental principle which underlies all Hannah More's theories of education is the necessity of Christian instruction, which Herbert Spencer says very little about, and apparently ignores. She would not divorce education from religion. Women, especially, owe their elevation entirely to Christianity. Hence its influence should be paramount, to exalt the soul as well as enlarge the mind. All sound education should prepare one for the duties of life, rather than for the enjoyment of its pleasures. What good can I do? should be the first inquiry. It is Christianity alone that teaches the ultimate laws of morals. Hannah More would subject every impulse and every pursuit and every study to these ultimate laws as a foundation for true and desirable knowledge. She would repress everything which looks like vanity. She would educate girls for their homes, and not for a crowd; for

usefulness, and not for admiration; for that period of life when external beauty is faded or lost. She thinks more highly of solid attainments than of accomplishments, and would incite to useful rather than unnecessary works. She would have a girl learn the languages, though she deems them of little value unless one can think in them. She would cultivate that "sensibility which has its seat in the heart, rather than the nerves." Anything which detracts from modesty and delicacy, and makes a girl bold, forward, and pushing, she severely rebukes. She would check all extravagance in dancing, and would not waste much time on music unless one has a talent for it. She thinks that the excessive cultivation of the arts has contributed to the decline of States. She is severe on that style of dress which permits an indelicate exposure of the person, and on all forms of senseless extravagance. She despises children's balls, and ridicules children's rights and "Liliputian coquetry" with ribbons and feathers. She would educate women to fulfil the duties of daughters, wives, and mothers rather than to make them dancers, singers, players, painters, and actresses. She maintains that when a man of sense comes to marry, he wants a companion rather than a creature who can only dress and dance and play upon an instrument. Yet she does not discourage ornamental talent; she admits it is a good thing, but not the best thing that a

woman has. She would not cut up time into an endless multiplicity of employments. She urges mothers to impress on their daughters' minds a discriminating estimate of personal beauty, so that they may not have their heads turned by the adulation that men are so prone to lavish on those who are beautiful. While she deprecates harshness, she insists on a rigorous discipline. She would stimulate industry and the cultivation of moderate abilities, as more likely to win in the long race of life, — even as a barren soil and ungenial climate have generally produced the most thrifty people. She would banish frivolous books which give only superficial knowledge, and even those abridgments and compendiums which form too considerable a part of ordinary libraries, and recommends instead those works which exercise the reasoning faculties and stir up the powers of the mind. She expresses great contempt for English sentimentality, French philosophy, Italian poetry, and German mysticism, and is scarcely less severe on the novels of her day, which stimulate the imagination without adding to knowledge. She recommends history as the most improving of all studies, both as a revelation of the ways of Providence and as tending to the enlargement of the mind. She insists on accuracy in language and on avoiding exaggerations. She inculcates co-operation with man, and not rivalry or struggle for power. What she says

about women's rights — which, it seems, was a question that agitated even her age — is worth quoting, since it is a woman, and not a man, who speaks: —

"Is it not more wise to move contentedly in the plain path which Providence has obviously marked out for the sex, and in which custom has for the most part rationally confirmed them, rather than to stray awkwardly, unbecomingly, unsuccessfully, in a forbidden road; to be the lawful possessors of a lesser domestic territory, rather than the turbulent usurpers of a wider foreign empire; to be good originals, rather than bad imitators; to be the best thing of one's kind, rather than an inferior thing even if it were of a higher kind; to be excellent women, rather than indifferent men? Let not woman view with envy the keen satirist hunting vice through all the doublings and windings of the heart; the sagacious politician leading senates and directing the fate of empires; the acute lawyer detecting the obliquities of fraud, or the skilful dramatist exposing the pretensions of folly; but let her remember that those who thus excel, to all that Nature bestows and books can teach must add besides that consummate knowledge of the world to which a delicate woman has no fair avenues, and which, even if she could attain, she would never be supposed to have come honestly by. . . . Women possess in a high degree that delicacy and quickness of perception, and that nice discernment between the beautiful and defective which comes under the denomination of taste. Both in composition and action they excel in details; but they do not so much

generalize their ideas as men, nor do their minds seize a great subject with so large a grasp. They are acute observers, and accurate judges of life and manners, so far as their own sphere of observation extends; but they describe a smaller circle. And they have a certain tact which enables them to feel what is just more instantaneously than they can define it. They have an intuitive penetration into character bestowed upon them by Providence, like the sensitive and tender organs of some timid animals, as a kind of natural guard to warn of the approach of danger, — beings who are often called to act defensively.

"But whatever characteristic distinctions may exist between man and woman, there is one great and leading circumstance which raises woman and establishes her equality with man. Christianity has exalted woman to true and undisputed dignity. 'In Christ Jesus there is neither rich nor poor, bond nor free, male nor female.' So that if we deny to women the talents which lead them to excel as lawyers, they are preserved from the peril of having their principles warped by that too indiscriminate defence of right and wrong to which the professors of the law are exposed. If we question their title to eminence as mathematicians, they are exempted from the danger of looking for demonstration on subjects which, by their very nature, are incapable of affording it. If they are less conversant with the powers of Nature, the structure of the human frame, and the knowledge of the heavenly bodies than philosophers, physicians, and astronomers, they are delivered from the error int

which many of each of these have sometimes fallen, from the fatal habit of resting on second causes, instead of referring all to the first. And let women take comfort that in their very exemption from privileges which they are sometimes disposed to envy, consist their security and their happiness."

Thus spoke Hannah More at the age of fifty-four, with a wider experience of society and a profounder knowledge of her sex than any Englishwoman of the eighteenth century, and as distinguished for her intellectual gifts and cultivation as she was for her social graces and charms, — the pet and admiration of all who were great and good in her day, both among men and women. Bear these facts in mind, ye obscure, inexperienced, discontented, envious, ambitious seekers after notoriety or novelty! — ye rebellious and defiant opponents of the ordinances of God and the laws of Nature, if such women there are! — remember that the sentiments I have just quoted came from the pen of a woman, and not of a man; of a woman who was the best friend of her sex, and the most enlightened advocate of their education that lived in the last century; and a woman who, if she were living now, would undoubtedly be classed with those whom we call strong-minded, and perhaps masculine and ambitious. She recognizes the eternal distinction between the sphere of a man and the sphere of a woman, with-

out admitting any inferiority of woman to man, except in physical strength and a sort of masculine power of generalization and grasp. And *she* would educate woman for her own sphere, not for the sphere of man, whatever Christianity, or experience, or reason may define that sphere to be. She would make woman useful interesting, lofty; she would give dignity to her soul, she would make her the friend and helpmate of man, not his rival; she would make her a Christian woman, since, with Christian virtues and graces and principles, she will not be led astray.

But I would not dwell on ground which may be controverted, and which to some may appear discourteous or discouraging to those noble women who are doomed by dire and hard misfortunes, by terrible necessities, to labor in some fields which have been assigned to man, and in which departments they have earned the admiration and respect of men themselves. This subject is only one in a hundred which Hannah More discussed with clearness, power, and wisdom. She is equally valuable and impressive in what she says of conversation, — a realm in which she had no superior. Hear what she says about this gift or art:

"Do we wish to see women take a lead in metaphysical disquisitions, — to plunge in the depths of theological polemics? Do we wish to enthrone them in the chairs of our

universities, to deliver oracles, harangues, and dissertations? Do we desire to behold them, inflated with their original powers, laboring to strike out sparks of wit, with a restless anxiety to shine, and with a labored affectation to please, which never pleases? All this be far from them! But we *do* wish to see the conversation of well-bred women rescued from vapid commonplaces, from uninteresting tattle, from trite communications, from frivolous earnestness, from false sensibility, from a warm interest about things of no moment, and an indifference to topics the most important, from a cold vanity, from the overflows of self-love, exhibiting itself under the smiling mask of an engaging flattery; and from all the factitious manners of artificial intercourse. We *do* wish to see the time passed in polished and intelligent society considered as the pleasant portion of our existence, and not consigned to premeditated trifling and systematic unprofitableness. Women too little live or converse up to their understandings; and however we deprecate affectation and pedantry, let it be remembered that both in reading and conversing the understanding gains more by stretching than stooping. The mind by applying itself to objects below its level, contracts and shrinks itself to the size of the object about which it is conversant. In the faculty of speaking well, ladies have such a happy promptitude of turning their slender advantages to account, that though never taught a rule of syntax, they hardly ever violate one, and often possess an elegant arrangement of style without having studied any of the laws of composition. And yet they are too ready to

produce not only pedantic expressions, but *crude* notions and hackneyed remarks with all the vanity of conscious discovery, and all from reading mere abridgments and scanty sketches rather than exhausting subjects."

Equally forcible are her remarks on society: —

"Perhaps," said she, "the interests of friendship, elegant conversation, and true social pleasure, never received such a blow as when fashion issued the decree that *everybody must be acquainted with everybody*. The decline of instructive conversation has been effected in a great measure by the barbarous habit of assembly *en masse*, where one hears the same succession of unmeaning platitudes, mutual insincerities, and aimless inquiries. It would be trite, however, to dwell on the vapid talk which must almost of necessity mark those who assemble in crowds, and which we are taught to call society, which really cannot exist without the free interchange of thought and sentiment. Hence society only truly shines in small and select circles of people of high intelligence, who are drawn together by friendship as well as admiration."

About two years after this work on education appeared, — education in the broadest sense, pertaining to woman at home and in society as well as at school, — Hannah More moved from her little thatched cottage, and built Barley Wood, — a large villa, where she could entertain the increasing circle of her friends, who were at this period only the learned, the pious, and the dis-

tinguished, especially bishops like Porteus and Horne, and philanthropists like Wilberforce. The beauty of this new residence amid woods and lawns attracted her sisters from Bath, who continued to live with her the rest of their lives, and to co-operate with her in deeds of benevolence. In this charming retreat she wrote perhaps the most famous of her books, "Cœlebs in Search of a Wife," — not much read, I fancy, in these times, but admired in its day before the great revolution in novel-writing was made by Sir Walter Scott. Yet this work is no more a novel than the "Dialogues of Plato." Like "Rasselas," it is a treatise, — a narrative essay on the choice of a wife, the expansion and continuation of her strictures on education and fashionable life. This work appeared in 1808, when the writer was sixty-three years of age. As on former occasions, she now not only assumed an anonymous name, but endeavored to hide herself under deeper incognita, — all, however, to no purpose, as everybody soon knew, from the style, who the author was. The first edition of this popular work — popular, I mean, in its day, for no work is popular long, though it may remain forever a classic on the shelves of libraries — was sold in two weeks. Twelve thousand were published the first year, the profits of which were £2,000. In this country the sale was larger, thirty thousand copies being sold during the life of the author. It was also translated into most

of the modern languages of Europe. In 1811 appeared her work on "Christian Morals," which had a sale of ten thousand; and in 1815 her essay on the "Character and Practical Writings of Saint Paul," of which seven thousand copies were sold. These works were followed by her "Moral Sketches of Prevailing Opinions and Manners," of which ten thousand were sold, and which realized a royalty of £3,000.

At the age of eighty, Hannah More wrote her "Spirit of Prayer," of which nearly twenty thousand copies were printed; and with this work her literary career virtually closed. Her later works were written amid the pains of disease and many distractions, especially visits from distinguished and curious people, which took up her time and sadly interrupted her labors. At the age of eighty though still receiving many visitors, she found herself nearly alone in the world. All her most intimate friends had died, — Mrs. Garrick at the age of ninety-eight; Sir William Pepys (the Lælius of the "Bas Bleu"); Dr. Porteus, Bishop of London; Dr. Fisher, Bishop of Salisbury; Bishop Horne, Bishop Barrington; Dr. Andrew, Dean of Canterbury; and Lady Cremon, besides her three sisters. The friends of her earlier days had long since passed away, — Garrick, Johnson, Reynolds, Horace Walpole. Of those who started in the race with her few were left. Still visitors continued to throng her house to the last, impelled

by admiration or curiosity; and she was obliged at length to limit her *levee* to the hours between one and three.

Hannah More lived at Barley Wood nearly thirty years in dignified leisure, with an ample revenue and in considerable style, keeping her carriage and horses, with a large number of servants, dispensing a generous hospitality, and giving away in charities a considerable part of her income. She realized from her pen £30,000, and her sisters also had accumulated a fortune by their school in Bristol. Her property must have been considerable, since on her death she bequeathed in charities nearly £10,000, beside endowing a church. She spent about £900 a year in charities.

The last few years of her residence at Barley Wood were disturbed by the ingratitude and dishonesty of her servants. They deceived and robbed her, especially those to whom she had been most kind and generous. She was, at her advanced age, entirely dependent on these servants, so that she could not reform her establishment. There was the most shameless peculation in the kitchen, and money given in charity was appropriated by the servants, who all combined to cheat her. Out of her sight, they were disorderly: they gave nocturnal suppers to their friends and drank up her wines. So she resolved to discharge the whole of them, and sell her beautiful place; and

when she finally left her home, these servants openly insulted her. She removed to a house in Clifton, where she had equal comfort and fewer cares. In this house she spent the remaining four years of her useful life, dispensing charities, and entertaining the numerous friends who visited her, and the crowd who came to do her honor. She died in September, 1833, at the age of eighty-eight, retaining her intellectual faculties, like Madame de Maintenon, nearly to the last. She was buried with great honors. A beautiful monument was erected to her memory in the parish church where her mortal remains were laid, — the subscription to this monument being five times greater than the sum needed.

Hannah More was strongly attached to the Church of England, and upheld the authority of the established religious institutions of the country. She excited some hostility from the liberality of her views, for she would occasionally frequent the chapels of the Dissenters and partake of their communion. She was supposed by many to lean towards Methodism, — as everybody was accused of doing in the last century, in England, who led a strictly religious life. She was evangelical in her views, but was not Calvinistic; nor was she a believer in instantaneous conversions, any more than she was in baptismal regeneration. She contributed liberally to religious and philanthropic societies. The best

book, she thought, that was ever published was Jeremy Taylor's "Holy Living and Dying;" but her opinion was that John Howe was a greater man. She was a great admirer of Shakspeare, whom she placed on the highest pedestal of human genius. She also admired Sir Walter Scott's poetry, especially "Marmion." She admitted the genius of Byron, but had such detestation of his character that she would not read his poetry.

The best and greatest part of the life of Hannah More was devoted to the education and elevation of her sex. Her most valuable writings were educational and moral. Her popularity did not wane with advancing years. No literary woman ever had warmer friends; and these she retained. She never lost a friend except by death. She had to lament over no broken friendships, since her friendships were based on respect and affection. Her nature must have been very genial. For so strict a woman in her religious duties, she was very tolerant of human infirmities. She was faithful in reproof, but having once given her friendship she held on to it with great tenacity; she clung to the worldly Horace Walpole as she did to Dr. Johnson. The most intimate woman friend of her long life was a Catholic. Hannah was never married, which was not her fault, for she was jilted by the man she loved, — for whom, however, she is said to have retained a friendly feeling to the last.

Though unmarried, she was addressed as Mrs., not Miss, More; and she seems to have insisted on this, which I think was a weakness, since the dignity of her character, her fame and high social position, needed no conventional crutch to make her appear more matronly. As a mere fashionable woman of society, her name would never have descended to our times; as a moralist she is immortal, so far as any writer can be. As an author, I do not regard her as a great original genius; but her successful and honorable career shows how much may be done by industry and perseverance. Her memory is kept especially fresh from the interest she took in the education of her sex, and from her wise and sage counsels, based on religion and a wide experience. No woman ever had better opportunities for the study of her sex, or more nobly improved them. She was the most enlightened advocate of a high education for women that her age and even her century produced.

Now, what is meant by a high education for women? for in our times the opinions of people in regard to this matter are far from being harmonious. Indeed, on no subject is there more disagreement; there is no subject which provokes more bitter and hostile comments; there is no subject on which both men and women wrangle with more acerbity, even when they are virtually agreed, — for the instincts of good women are

really in accord with the profoundest experience and reason of men.

In the few remarks to which I am now limited I shall not discuss the irritating and disputed question of co-education of the sexes, which can only be settled by experience. On this subject we have not yet sufficient facts for a broad induction. On the one hand, it would seem that so long as young men and women mingle freely together in amusements, at parties and balls, at the theatre and opera, in the lecture-room, in churches, and most public meetings, it is not probable that any practical evils can result from educational competition of the two sexes in the same class-rooms, especially when we consider that many eminent educators have given their testimony in its favor, so far as it has fallen under their observation and experience. But, on the other hand, the co-education of the sexes may imply that both girls and boys, by similarity of studies, are to be educated for the same sphere. Boys study the higher mathematics not merely for mental discipline, but in order to be engineers, astronomers, surveyors, and the like; so, too, they study chemistry in its higher branches, to be chemists and physicians and miners. If girls wish to do this rough work, let them know that they seek to do men's work. If they are to do women's work, it would seem that they should give more attention to music, the modern languages

and ornamental branches than boys do, since few men pursue these things as a business.

The question is, Is it wise for boys and girls to pursue the same studies in the more difficult branches of knowledge? I would withhold no study from a woman on the ground of assumed intellectual inferiority. I believe that a woman can grasp any subject as well as a man can, so far and so long as her physical strength will permit her to make exhaustive researches. There are some studies which task the physical strength of men to its utmost tension. If any woman has equal physical power with men to master certain subjects, let her pursue them; for success, even with men, depends upon physical endurance as well as brain-power. And thus the question is one of physical strength and endurance; and women must settle for themselves whether they can run races with men in studies in which only the physically strong can hope to succeed.

Then, again, I would educate women with reference to the sphere in which they must forever move,—a sphere settled by the eternal laws of Nature and duty, against which it is folly to rebel. Does any one doubt or deny that the sphere of women *is* different from the sphere of men? Can it be questioned that a class of studies pursued by women who are confined for a considerable period of life to domestic duties,—like the

care of children, and the details of household economy, and attendance on the sick, and ornamental art labors, — should not be different from those pursued by men who undertake the learned professions, and the government of the people, and the accumulation of wealth in the hard drudgeries of banks and counting-houses and stores and commercial travelling? There is no way to get round this question except by maintaining that men should not be exempted from the cares and duties which for all recorded ages have been assigned to women; and that women should enter upon the equally settled sphere of man, and become lawyers, politicians, clergymen, members of Congress and of State legislatures, sailors, merchants, commercial travellers, bankers, railway conductors, and steamship captains. I once knew the discontented wife of an eminent painter, with a brilliant intellect, who insisted that her husband should leave his studio and spend five hours a day in the drudgeries of the nursery and kitchen to relieve her, and that she should spend the five hours in her studio as an amateur, — that they thus might be on an equality! The husband died in a mad-house, after dying for a year with a broken heart and a crushed ambition. He was obliged to submit to his wife's demand, or fight from morning to night and from night to morning; and as he was a man of peace, he quietly yielded up his prerogative. Do you admire

the one who prevailed over him? She belonged to that class who are called strong-minded; but she was perverted, as some noble minds are, by atheistic and spiritualistic views, and thought to raise women by lifting them out of the sphere which God has appointed.

If, then, there be distinct spheres, divinely appointed, for women and for men, and an education should be given to fit them for rising in their respective spheres, the question arises, What studies shall woman pursue in order to develop her mind and resources, and fit her for happiness and usefulness? This question is only to be answered by those who have devoted their lives to the education of young ladies. I would go into no details; I would only lay down the general proposition that a woman should be educated to be interesting both to her own sex and to men; to be useful in her home; to exercise the best influence on her female and male companions; to have her affections as well as intellect developed; to have her soul elevated so as to be kindled by lofty sentiments, and to feel that there is something higher than the adornment of the person, or the attracting of attention in those noisy crowds which are called society. She should be taught to become the friend and helpmate of man,—never his rival. She is to be invested with those graces which call out the worship of man, which cause her to shine with the radiance of the soul, and with those virtues which men

rarely reach, — a superior loftiness of character, a greater purity of mind, a heavenlike patience and magnanimity. She is not an angel, but a woman; yet she should shine with angelic qualities and aspire to angelic virtues, and prove herself, morally and spiritually, to be so superior to man, that he will render to her an instinctive deference; not a mock and ironical deference, because she is supposed to be inferior and weak, but a real deference, a genuine respect on which all permanent friendship rests, — and even love itself, which every woman, as well as every man, craves from the bottom of the soul, and without which life has no object, no charm, and no interest.

Is woman necessarily made a drudge by assuming those domestic duties which add so much to the unity and happiness of a family, and which a man cannot so well discharge as he can the more arduous labors of supporting a family? Are her labors in directing servants or educating her children more irksome than the labors of a man, in heat and cold, often among selfish and disagreeable companions? Is woman, in restricting herself to her sphere, thereby debarred from the pleasures of literature and art? As a rule, is she not already better educated than her husband? However domestic she may be, cannot she still paint and sing, and read and talk on the grandest subjects? Is she not really more privileged than her husband or brother, with

more time and less harassing cares and anxieties? Would she really exchange her graceful labors for the rough and turbulent work of men?

But here I am stopped with the inquiry, What will you do with those women who are unfortunate, who have no bright homes to adorn, no means of support, no children to instruct, no husbands to rule: women cast out of the sphere where they would like to live, and driven to hard and uncongenial labors, forced to run races with men, or starve? To such my remarks do not apply; they are exceptions, and not the rule. To them I would say, Do cheerfully what Providence seems to point out for *you;* do the best you can, even in the sphere into which you are forced. If you are at any time thrown upon your own resources, and compelled to adopt callings which task your physical strength, accept such lot with resignation, but without any surrender of your essentially feminine and womanly qualities; do not try to be like men, for men are lower than you in their ordinary tastes and occupations. And I would urge all women, rich and poor, to pursue some one art, — like music, or painting, or decoration, — not only for amusement, but with the purpose to carry it so far that in case of misfortune they can fall back upon it and get a living; for proficiency in these arts belongs as much to the sphere of women as of men, since it refines and cultivates them

But again some may say, — not those who are unfortunate, and seemingly driven from the glories and beatitudes of woman's sphere, but those who are peculiarly intellectual and aspiring, and in some respects very interesting, — Why should not we embark in some of those callings which heretofore have been assigned to or usurped by man, and become physicians, and professors in colleges, and lawyers, and merchants, not because we are driven to get a living, but because we prefer them; and hence, in order to fit ourselves for these departments, why should we not pursue the highest studies which task the intellect of man? To such I would reply, Do so, if you please; there is no valid reason why you should not try. Nor will you fail unless your frailer bodies fail, as fail they will, in a long race, — for do what you will to strengthen and develop your physical forces for a million of years, you will still be women, and physically weaker than men; that is, your nervous system cannot stand the strain of that long-continued and intense application which all professional men are compelled to exert in order to gain success. But if you have in any individual case the physical strength of a man, do what you please, so long as you preserve the delicacy and purity of womanhood, — practise medicine or law, keep school, translate books, keep boarders, go behind a counter; yea, keep a shop, set types, keep accounts, give music and French

lessons, sing in concerts and churches, — do whatever you can do as well as men. You have that right; nobody will molest you or slander you. If you must, or if you choose to, labor so, God help you!

So, then, the whole question of woman's education is decided by physical limitations, concerning which there is no dispute, and against which it is vain to rebel; and we return to the more agreeable task of pointing out the supreme necessity of developing in woman those qualities which will make her a guide and a radiance and a benediction in that sphere to which Nature and Providence and immemorial custom would appear to have assigned her. Let her become great as a woman, not as a man. Let her maintain her rights; but in doing so, let her not forget her duties. The Bible says nothing at all about the former, and very much about the latter. Let her remember that she is the complement of a man, and hence that what is most feminine about her is most interesting to man and useful to the world. God made man and woman of one flesh, yet unlike. And who can point out any fundamental inferiority or superiority between them? The only superiority lies in the superior way in which each discharges peculiar trusts and responsibilities. It is in this light alone that we see some husbands superior to their wives, and some wives superior to

their husbands. No sensible person would say that a girl is superior to her brother because she has a greater aptness for mathematics than he, but because she excels in the queen-like attributes and virtues and duties peculiar to her own sex and belonging to her own sphere, — that sphere so beautiful, that when she abdicates it, it is like being expelled from Paradise; for, once lost, it can never be regained. That education is best even for a great woman, — great in intellect as in soul, — which best develops the lofty ideal of womanhood; which best makes her a real woman, and not a poor imitation of man, and gives to her the dignity and grace of a queen over her household, and brings out that moral beauty by which she reigns over her husband's heart, and inspires the reverence which children ought to feel. Do we derogate from the greatness of women when we seek to kindle the brightness of that moral beauty which outshines all the triumphs of mere intellectual forces? Should women murmur because they cannot be superior in everything, when it is conceded that they are superior in the best thing? Nor let her clutch what she can neither retain nor enjoy. In the primeval Paradise there was one tree the fruit of which our mother Eve was forbidden to touch or to eat. There is a tree which grows in our times, whose fruit, when eaten by some, produces unrest, discontent, rebellion against

God, unsatisfied desires, a revelation of unrealized miseries, the mere contemplation of which is enough to drive to madness and moral death. Yet of all the other trees of life's garden may woman eat, — those trees that grow in the boundless field which modern knowledge and enterprise have revealed to woman, and which, if she confine herself thereto, will make her a blessing and a glory forever to fallen and afflicted humanity

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AUTHORITIES

GEORGE ELIOT.

A. D. 1819–1880.

WOMAN AS NOVELIST.

GEORGE ELIOT.

WOMAN AS NOVELIST.

SINCE the dawn of modern civilization, every age has been marked by some new development of genius or energy. In the twelfth and thirteenth centuries we notice Gothic architecture, the rise of universities, the scholastic philosophy, and a general interest in metaphysical inquiries. The fourteenth century witnessed chivalric heroism, courts of love, tournaments, and amorous poetry. In the fifteenth century we see the revival of classical literature and Grecian art. The sixteenth century was a period of reform, theological discussions, and warfare with Romanism. In the seventeenth century came contests for civil and religious liberty, and discussions on the theological questions which had agitated the Fathers of the Church. The eighteenth century was marked by the speculations of philosophers and political economists, ending in revolution. The nineteenth century has been distinguished for scien-

tific discoveries and inventions directed to practical and utilitarian ends, and a wonderful development in the literature of fiction. It is the age of novelists, as the fifteenth century was the age of painters. Everybody now reads novels, — bishops, statesmen, judges, scholars, as well as young men and women. The shelves of libraries groan with the weight of novels of every description, — novels sensational, novels sentimental, novels historical, novels philosophical, novels social, and novels which discuss every subject under the sun. Novelists aim to be teachers in ethics, philosophy, politics, religion, and art; and they are rapidly supplanting lecturers and clergymen as the guides of men, accepting no rivals but editors and reviewers.

This extraordinary literary movement was started by Sir Walter Scott, who made a revolution in novel-writing, introducing a new style, freeing romances from bad taste, vulgarity, insipidity, and false sentiment. He painted life and Nature without exaggerations, avoided interminable scenes of love-making, and gave a picture of society in present and past times so fresh, so vivid, so natural, so charming, and so true, and all with such inimitable humor, that he still reigns without a peer in his peculiar domain. He is as rich in humor as Fielding, without his coarseness; as inventive as Swift, without his bitterness; as moral as

Richardson, without his tediousness. He did not aim to teach ethics or political economy directly, although he did not disguise his opinions. His chief end was to please and instruct at the same time, stimulating the mind through the imagination rather than the reason; so healthful that fastidious parents made an exception of his novels among all others that had ever been written, and encouraged the young to read them. Sir Walter Scott took off the ban which religious people had imposed on novel-reading.

Then came Dickens, amazingly popular, with his grotesque descriptions of life, his exaggerations, his impossible characters and improbable incidents; yet so genial in sympathies, so rich in humor, so indignant at wrongs, so broad in his humanity, that everybody loved to read him, although his learning was small and his culture superficial.

Greatly superior to him as an artist and a thinker was Thackeray, whose fame has been steadily increasing, — the greatest master of satire in English literature, and one of the truest painters of social life that any age has produced; not so much admired by women as by men; accurate in his delineation of character, though sometimes bitter and fierce; felicitous in plot, teaching lessons in morality, unveiling shams and hypocrisy, contemptuous of all fools and quacks, yet sad in his reflections on human life.

In the brilliant constellation of which Dickens and Thackeray were the greater lights was Bulwer Lytton, — versatile; subjective in genius; sentimental, and yet not sensational; reflective, yet not always sound in morals; learned in general literature, but a charlatan in scientific knowledge; worldly in his spirit, but not a pagan; an inquisitive student, seeking to penetrate the mysteries of Nature as well as to paint characters and events in other times; and leaving a higher moral impression when he was old than when he was young.

Among the lesser lights, yet real stars, that have blazed in this generation are Reade, Kingsley, Black, James, Trollope, Cooper, Howells, Wallace, and a multitude of others, in France and Germany as well as England and America, to say nothing of the thousands who have aspired and failed as artists, yet who have succeeded in securing readers and in making money.

And what shall I say of the host of female novelists which this age has produced, — women who have inundated the land with productions both good and bad; mostly feeble, penetrating the cottages of the poor rather than the palaces of the rich, and making the fortunes of magazines and news-vendors, from Maine to California? But there are three women novelists, writing in English, standing out in this group of mediocrity, who have earned a just and wide fame, —

Charlotte Brontë, Harriet Beecher Stowe, and Marian Evans, who goes by the name of George Eliot.

It is the last of these remarkable women whom it is my object to discuss, and who burst upon the literary world as a star whose light has been constantly increasing since she first appeared. She takes rank with Dickens, Thackeray, and Bulwer, and some place her higher even than Sir Walter Scott. Her fame is prodigious, and it is a glory to her sex; indeed, she is an intellectual phenomenon. No woman ever received such universal fame as a genius except, perhaps, Madame de Staël; or as an artist, if we except Madame Dudevant, who also bore a *nom de plume*, — Georges Sand. She did not become immediately popular, but the critics from the first perceived her remarkable gifts and predicted her ultimate success. For vivid description of natural scenery and rural English life, minute analysis of character, and psychological insight she has never been surpassed by men; while for learning and profundity she has never been equalled by women, — a deep, serious, sad writer, without vanity or egotism or pretension; a great but not always sound teacher, who, by common consent and prediction, will live and rank among the classical authors in English literature.

Marian Evans was born in Warwickshire, about twenty miles from Stratford-on-Avon, — the county of

Shakspeare, one of the most fertile and beautiful in England, whose parks and lawns and hedges and picturesque cottages, with their gardens and flowers and thatched roofs, present to the eye a perpetual charm. Her father, of Welsh descent, was originally a carpenter, but became, by his sturdy honesty, ability, and abiding sense of duty, land agent to Sir Roger Newdigate of Arbury Hall. Mr. Evans's sterling character probably furnished the model for Adam Bede and Caleb Garth.

Sprung from humble ranks, but from conscientious and religious parents, who appreciated the advantage of education, Miss Evans was allowed to make the best of her circumstances. We have few details of her early life on which we can accurately rely. She was not an egotist, and did not leave an autobiography like Trollope, or reminiscences like Carlyle; but she has probably portrayed herself, in her early aspirations, as Madame de Staël did, in the characters she has created. The less we know about the personalities of very distinguished geniuses, the better it is for their fame. Shakspeare might not seem so great to us if we knew his peculiarities and infirmities as we know those of Voltaire, Rousseau, and Carlyle; only such a downright honest and good man as Dr. Johnson can stand the severe scrutiny of after times and "destructive criticism."

It would appear that Miss Evans was sent to a school in Nuneaton before she was ten, and afterwards to a school in Coventry, kept by two excellent Methodist ladies, — the Misses Franklin, — whose lives and teachings enabled her to delineate Dinah Morris. As a school-girl we are told that she had the manners and appearance of a woman. Her hair was pale brown, worn in ringlets; her figure was slight, her head massive, her mouth large, her jaw square, her complexion pale, her eyes gray-blue, and her voice rich and musical. She lost her mother at sixteen, when she most needed maternal counsels, and afterwards lived alone with her father until 1841, when they removed to Foleshill, near Coventry. She was educated in the doctrines of the Low or Evangelical Church, which are those of Calvin, — although her Calvinism was early modified by the Arminian views of Wesley. At twelve she taught a class in a Sunday-school; at twenty she wrote poetry, as most bright girls do. The head-master of the grammar school in Coventry taught her Greek and Latin, while Signor Brizzi gave her lessons in Italian, French, and German; she also played on the piano with great skill. Her learning and accomplishments were so unusual, and gave such indication of talent, that she was received as a friend in the house of Mr. Charles Bray, of Coventry, a wealthy ribbon-merchant, where she saw many eminent literary men of the progressive

school, among whom were James Anthony Froude and Ralph Waldo Emerson.

At what period the change in her religious views took place I have been unable to ascertain, — probably between the ages of twenty-one and twenty-five, by which time she had become a remarkably well-educated woman, of great conversational powers, interesting because of her intelligence, brightness, and sensibility but not for her personal beauty. In fact, she was not merely homely, she was even ugly; though many admirers saw great beauty in her eyes and expression when her countenance was lighted up. She was unobtrusive and modest, and retired within herself.

At this period she translated from the German the "Life of Jesus," by Strauss, Feuerbach's "Essence of Christianity," and one of Spinoza's works. Why should a young woman have selected such books to translate? How far the writings of rationalistic and atheistic philosophers affected her own views we cannot tell; but at this time her progressive and advanced opinions irritated and grieved her father, so that, as we are told, he treated her with intolerant harshness. With all her paganism, however, she retained the sense of duty, and was devoted in her attentions to her father until he died, in 1849. She then travelled on the Continent with the Brays, seeing most of the countries of Europe, and studying their languages, manners, and

institutions. She resided longest in a boarding-house near Geneva, amid scenes renowned by the labors of Gibbon, Voltaire, and Madame de Staël, in sight of the Alps, absorbed in the theories of St. Simon and Proudhon, — a believer in the necessary progress of the race as the result of evolution rather than of revelation or revolution.

Miss Evans returned to England about the year 1857, — the year of the Great Exhibition, — and soon after became sub-editor of the "Westminster Review," at one time edited by John Stuart Mill, but then in charge of John Chapman, the proprietor, at whose house, in the Strand, she boarded. There she met a large circle of literary and scientific men of the ultra-liberal, radical school, those who looked upon themselves as the more advanced thinkers of the age, whose aim was to destroy belief in supernaturalism and inspiration; among whom were John Stuart Mill, Francis Newman, Herbert Spencer, James Anthony Froude, G. H. Lewes, John A. Roebuck, and Harriet Martineau, — dreary theorists, mistrusted and disliked equally by the old Whigs and Tories, high-churchmen, and evangelical Dissenters; clever thinkers and learned doubters, but arrogant, discontented, and defiant.

It was then that the friendly attachment between Miss Evans and Mr. Lewes began, which ripened into love and ended in a scandal. Mr. Lewes was a

homely as Wilkes, and was three years older than Miss Evans, — a very bright, witty, versatile, learned, and accomplished man; a brilliant talker, novelist, playwright, biographer, actor, essayist, and historian, whose "Life of Goethe" is still the acknowledged authority in Germany itself, as Carlyle's "Frederic the Great" is also regarded. But his fame has since been eclipsed by that of the woman he pretended to call his wife, and with whom (his legal wife being still alive) he lived in open defiance of the seventh Commandment and the social customs of England for twenty years. This unfortunate connection, which saddened the whole subsequent life of Miss Evans, and tinged all her writings with the gall of her soul, excluded her from that high conventional society which it has been the aim of most ambitious women to enter. But this exclusion was not, perhaps, so great an annoyance to Miss Evans as it would have been to Hannah More, since she was not fitted to shine in general society, especially if frivolous, and preferred to talk with authors, artists, actors, and musical geniuses, rather than with prejudiced, pleasure-seeking, idle patricians, who had such attractions for Addison, Pope, Mackintosh, and other lights of literature, who unconsciously encouraged that idolatry of rank and wealth which is one of the most uninteresting traits of the English nation. Nor would those fashionable people, whom

the world calls "great," have seen much to attract them in a homely and unconventional woman whose views were discrepant with the established social and religious institutions of the land. A class that would not tolerate such a genius as Carlyle, would not have admired Marian Evans, even if the stern etiquette of English life had not excluded her from envied and coveted *réunions;* and she herself, doubtless, preferred to them the brilliant society which assembled in Mr. Chapman's parlors to discuss those philosophical and political theories of which Comte was regarded as the high-priest, and his positivism the essence of all progressive wisdom.

How far the gloomy materialism and superficial rationalism of Lewes may have affected the opinions of Miss Evans we cannot tell. He was her teacher and constant companion, and she passed as his wife; so it is probable that he strengthened in her mind that dreary pessimism which appeared in her later writings. Certain it is that she paid the penalty of violating a fundamental moral law, in the neglect of those women whose society she could have adorned, and possibly in the silent reproaches of conscience, which she portrayed so vividly in the characters of those heroines who struggled ineffectually in the conflict between duty and passion. True, she accepted the penalty without complaint, and labored to the end of her days. with

masculine strength, to enforce a life of duty and self-renunciation on her readers, — to live at least for the good of humanity. Nor did she court notoriety, like Georges Sand, who was as indifferent to reproach as she was to shame. Miss Evans led a quiet, studious, unobtrusive life with the man she loved, sympathetic in her intercourse with congenial friends, and devoted to domestic duties. And Mr. Lewes himself relieved her from many irksome details, that she might be free to prosecute her intense literary labors.

In this lecture on George Eliot I gladly would have omitted all allusion to a mistake which impairs our respect for this great woman. But defects cannot be unnoticed in an honest delineation of character; and no candid biographers, from those who described the lives of Abraham and David, to those who have portrayed the characters of Queen Elizabeth and Oliver Cromwell, have sought to conceal the moral defects of their subjects.

Aside from the translations already mentioned, the first literary efforts of Miss Evans were her articles in the "Westminster Review," a heavy quarterly, established to advocate philosophical radicalism. In this Review appeared from her pen the article on Carlyle's "Life of Sterling," "Madame de la Sablière," "Evangelical Teachings," "Heine," "Silly Novels by Lady Novelists," "The Natural History of German

Life," "Worldliness and Unworldliness,"— all powerfully written, but with a vein of bitter sarcasm in reference to the teachers of those doctrines which she fancied she had outgrown. Her connection with the "Review" closed in 1853, when she left Mr. Chapman's home and retired to a small house in Cambridge Terrace, Hyde Park, on a modest but independent income. In 1854 she revisited the Continent with Mr. Lewes, spending her time chiefly in Germany.

It was in 1857 that the first tales of Miss Evans were published in "Blackwood's Magazine," when she was thirty-eight, in the full maturity of her mind.

"The Sad Fortunes of Amos Barton" was the first of the series called "Scenes of Clerical Life" which appeared. Mr. Blackwood saw at once the great merit of the work, and although it was not calculated to arrest the attention of ordinary readers he published it, confident of its ultimate success. He did not know whether it was written by a man or by a woman; he only knew that he received it from the hand of Mr. Lewes, an author already well known as learned and brilliant. It is fortunate for a person in the conventional world of letters, as of society, to be well introduced.

This story, though gloomy in its tone, is fresh, unique, and interesting, and the style good, clear, vivid, strong. It opens with a beautiful description of an old-fashioned country church, with its high and

square pews, in which the devout worshippers could not be seen by one another, nor even by the parson. This functionary went to church in top-boots, and, after his short sermon of platitudes, dined with the squire, and spent the remaining days of the week in hunting or fishing, and his evenings in playing cards, quietly drinking his ale, and smoking his pipe. But the hero of the story — Amos Barton — is a different sort of man from his worldly and easy rector. He is a churchman, and yet intensely evangelical and devoted to his humble duties, — on a salary of £80, with a large family and a sick wife. He is narrow, but truly religious and disinterested. The scene of the story is laid in a retired country village in the Midland Counties, at a time when the Evangelical movement was in full force in England, in the early part of last century, contemporaneous with the religious revivals of New England; when the bucolic villagers had little to talk about or interest them, before railways had changed the face of the country, or the people had been aroused to political discussions and reforms. The sorrows of the worthy clergyman centered in an indiscreet and in part unwilling hospitality which he gave to an artful, needy, pretentious, selfish woman, but beautiful and full of soft flatteries; which hospitality provoked scandal, and caused the poor man to be driven away to another parish. The tragic element of the story, however.

centres in Mrs. Barton, who is an angel, radiant with moral beauty, affectionate, devoted, and uncomplaining, who dies at last from overwork and privations, and the cares of a large family of children.

There is no plot in this story, but its charm and power consist in a vivid description of common life, minute but not exaggerated, which enlists our sympathy with suffering and misfortune, deeply excites our interest in commonplace people living out their weary and monotonous existence. This was a new departure in fiction, — a novel without love-scenes or happy marriages or thrilling adventures or impossible catastrophes. But there is great pathos in this homely tale of sorrow, with no attempts at philosophizing, no digressions, no wearisome chapters that one wishes to skip, but all spontaneous, natural, free, showing reserved power, — the precious buds of promise destined to bloom in subsequent works, till the world should be filled with the aroma of its author's genius. And there is also great humor in this clerical tale, of which the following is a specimen: —

"'Eh, dear,' said Mrs. Patten, falling back in her chair and lifting up her withered hands, 'what would Mr. Gilfil say if he was worthy to know the changes as have come about in the church in these ten years? I don't understand these new sort of doctrines. When Mr. Barton comes to see me he talks about my sins and my need of marcy. Now, Mr. Hackett,

I 've never been a sinner. From the first beginning, when I went into service, I 've al'ys did my duty to my employers. I was as good a wife as any in the country, never aggravating my husband. The cheese-factor used to say that my cheeses was al'ys to be depended upon.' "

To describe clerical life was doubtless the aim which Miss Evans had in view in this and the two other tales which soon followed. In these, as indeed in all her novels, the clergy largely figure. She seems to be profoundly acquainted with the theological views of the different sects, as well as with the social habits of the different ministers. So far as we can detect her preference, it is for the Broad Church, or the "high-and-dry" clergy of the Church of England, especially those who were half squires and half parsons in districts where conservative opinions prevailed; for though she was a philosophical radical, she was reverential in her turn of mind, and clung to poetical and consecrated sentiments, always laying more stress on woman's *duties* than on her *rights*.

The second of the Clerical series — "Mr. Gilfil's Love Story" — is not so well told, nor is it so interesting as the first, besides being more after the fashion of ordinary stories. We miss in it the humor of good Mrs. Patten; nor are we drawn to the gin-and-water-drinking parson, although the description of

his early unfortunate love is done with a powerful hand. The story throughout is sad and painful.

The last of the series, "Janet's Repentance," is, I think, the best. The hero is again a clergyman, an evangelical, whose life is one long succession of protracted martyrdoms, — an expiation to atone for the desertion of a girl whom he had loved and ruined while in college. Here we see, for the first time in George Eliot's writings, that inexorable fate which pursues wrong-doing, and which so prominently stands out in all her novels. The singular thing is that she — at this time an advanced liberal — should have made the sinning young man, in the depth of his remorse, to find relief in that view of Christianity which is expounded by the Calvinists. But here she is faithful and true to the teaching of those by whom she was educated; and it is remarkable that her art enables her apparently to enter into the spiritual experiences of an evangelical curate with which she had no sympathy. She does not mock or deride, but seems to respect the religion which she had herself repudiated.

And the same truths which consoled the hard-working, self-denying curate are also made to redeem Janet herself, and secure for her a true repentance. This heroine of the story is the wife of a drunken, brutal village doctor, who dies of delirium tremens; she also

is the slave of the same degrading habit which destroys her husband, but, unlike him, is a victim of remorse and shame. In her despair she seeks advice and consolation from the minister whom she had ridiculed and despised; and through him she is led to seek that divine aid which alone enables a confirmed drunkard to conquer what by mere force of will is an unconquerable habit. And here George Eliot — for that is the name she now goes by — is in accord with the profound experience of many.

The whole tale, though short, is a triumph of art, and abounds with acute observations of human nature. It is a perfect picture of village life, with its gossip, its jealousies, its enmities, and its religious quarrels, showing on the part of the author an extraordinary knowledge of theological controversies and the religious movements of the early part of the nineteenth century. So vivid is her description of rural life, that the tale is really an historical painting, like the Dutch pictures of the seventeenth century, to be valued as an accurate delineation rather than a mere imaginary scene. Madonnas, saints, and such like pictures which fill the churches of Italy and Spain, works of the old masters, are now chiefly prized for their grace of form and richness of coloring, — exhibitions of ideal beauty, charming as creations, but not such as we see in real life; George Eliot's novels, on the contrary, are not works of

imagination, like the frescos in the Sistine Chapel, but copies of real life, like those of Wilkie and Teniers, which we value for their fidelity to Nature. And in regard to the passion of love, she does not portray it, as in the old-fashioned novels, leading to fortunate marriages with squires and baronets; but she generally dissects it, unravels it, and attempts to penetrate its mysteries, — a work decidedly more psychological than romantic or sentimental, and hence more interesting to scholars and thinkers than to ordinary readers, who delight in thrilling adventures and exciting narrations.

The "Scenes of Clerical Life" were followed the next year by "Adam Bede," which created a great impression on the cultivated mind of England and America. It did not create what is called a "sensation." I doubt if it was even popular with the generality of readers, nor was the sale rapid at first; but the critics saw that a new star of extraordinary brilliancy had arisen in the literary horizon. The unknown author entered, as she did in "Janet's Repentance," an entirely new field, with wonderful insight into the common life of uninteresting people, with a peculiar humor, great power of description, rare felicity of dialogue, and a deep undertone of serious and earnest reflection. And yet I confess, that when I first read "Adam Bede," twenty-five years ago, I was not much interested, and

I wondered why others were. It was not dramatic enough to excite me. Many parts of it were tedious. It seemed to me to be too much spun out, and its minuteness of detail wearied me. There was no great plot and no grand characters; nothing heroic, no rapidity of movement; nothing to keep me from laying the book down when the dinner-bell rang, or when the time came to go to bed. I did not then see the great artistic excellence of the book, and I did not care for a description of obscure people in the Midland Counties of England, — which, by the way, suggests a reason why "Adam Bede" cannot be appreciated by Americans as it is by the English people themselves, who every day see the characters described, and hear their dialect, and know their sorrows, and sympathize with their privations and labors. But after a closer and more critical study of the novel I have come to see merits that before escaped my eye. It is a study, a picture of humble English life, painted by the hand of a master, to be enjoyed most by people of critical discernment, and to be valued for its rare fidelity to Nature. It is of more true historical interest than many novels which are called historical, — even as the paintings of Rembrandt are more truly historical than those of Horace Vernet, since the former painted life as it really was in his day. Imaginative pictures are not those which are most prized by modern artists, or those

pictures which make every woman look like an angel and every man like a hero, — like those of Gainsborough or Reynolds, — however flattering they may be to those who pay for them.

I need not dwell on characters so well known as those painted in "Adam Bede." The hero is a painstaking, faithful journeyman carpenter, desirous of doing good work. Scotland and England abound in such men, and so did New England fifty years ago. This honest mechanic falls in love with a pretty but vain, empty, silly, selfish girl of his own class; but she had already fallen under the spell of the young squire of the village, — a good-natured fellow, of generous impulses, but essentially selfish and thoughtless, and utterly unable to cope with his duty. The carpenter, when he finds it out, gives vent to his wrath and jealousy, as is natural, and picks a quarrel with the squire and knocks him down, — an act of violence on the part of the inferior in rank not very common in England. The squire abandons his victim after ruining her character, — not an uncommon thing among young aristocrats, — and the girl strangely accepts the renewed attentions of her first lover, until the logic of events compels her to run away from home and become a vagrant. The tragic and interesting part of the novel is a vivid painting of the terrible sufferings of the ruined girl in her desolate wanderings, and of her trial for

abandoning her infant child to death, — the inexorable law of fate driving the sinner into the realms of darkness and shame. The story closes with the prosaic marriage of Adam Bede to Dinah Morris, — a Methodist preacher, who falls in love with him instead of his more pious brother Seth, who adores her. But the love of Adam and Dinah for one another is more spiritualized than is common, — is very beautiful, indeed, showing how love's divine elements can animate the human soul in all conditions of life. In the fervid spiritualism of Dinah's love for Adam we are reminded of a Saint Theresa seeking to be united with her divine spouse. Dinah is a religious rhapsodist, seeking wisdom and guidance in prayer; and the divine will is in accordance with her desires. "My soul," said she to Adam, "is so knit to yours that it is but a divided life if I live without you."

The most amusing and finely-drawn character in this novel is a secondary one, — Mrs. Poyser, — but painted with a vividness which Scott never excelled, and with a wealth of humor which Fielding never equalled. It is the wit and humor which George Eliot has presented in this inimitable character which make the book so attractive to the English, who enjoy these more than the Americans, — the latter delighting rather in what is grotesque and extravagant, like the elaborate absurdities of "Mark Twain." But this humor is more than that

of a shrewd and thrifty English farmer's wife; it belongs to human nature. We have seen such voluble sharp, sagacious, ironical, and worldly women among the farmhouses of New England, and heard them use language, when excited or indignant, equally idiomatic, though not particularly choice. Strike out the humor of this novel and the interest we are made to feel in commonplace people, and the story would not be a remarkable one.

"Adam Bede" was followed in a year by "The Mill on the Floss," the scene of which is also laid in a country village, where are some well-to-do people, mostly vulgar and uninteresting. This novel is to me more powerful than the one which preceded it, — having more faults, perhaps, but presenting more striking characters. As usual with George Eliot, her plot in this story is poor, involving improbable incidents and catastrophes. She is always unfortunate in her attempts to extricate her heroes and heroines from entangling difficulties. Invention is not her forte; she is weak when she departs from realistic figures. She is strongest in what she has seen, not in what she imagines; and here she is the opposite of Dickens, who paints from imagination. There was never such a man as Pickwick or Barnaby Rudge. Sir Walter Scott created characters, — like Jeannie Deans, — but they are as true to life as Sir John Falstaff.

Maggie Tulliver is the heroine of this story, in whose intellectual developments George Eliot painted herself, as Madame De Staël describes her own restless soul-agitations in "Delphine" and "Corinne." Nothing in fiction is more natural and life-like than the school-days of Maggie, when she goes fishing with her tyrannical brother, and when the two children quarrel and make up, — she, affectionate and yielding; he, fitful and overbearing. Many girls are tyrannized over by their brothers, who are often exacting, claiming the guardianship which belongs only to parents. But Maggie yields to her obstinate brother as well as to her unreasonable and vindictive father, governed by a sense of duty, until, with her rapid intellectual development and lofty aspiration, she breaks loose in a measure from their withering influence, though not from technical obligations. She almost loves Philip Wakem, the son of the lawyer who ruined her father; yet out of regard to family ties she refuses, while she does not yet repel, his love. But her real passion is for Stephen Gurst, who was betrothed to her cousin, and who returned Maggie's love with intense fervor.

> "Why did he love her? Curious fools, be still!
> Is human love the fruit of human will?"

She knows she ought not to love this man, yet she combats her passion with poor success, allows herself to

be compromised in her relations with him, and is only rescued by a supreme effort of self-renunciation, — a principle which runs through all George Eliot's novels, in which we see the doctrines of Buddha rather than those of Paul, although at times they seem to run into each other. Maggie erred in not closing the gate of her heart inexorably, and in not resisting the sway of a purely "physiological law." The vivid description of this sort of love, with its "strange agitations" and agonizing ecstasies, would have been denounced as immoral fifty years ago. The *dénouement* is an improbable catastrophe on a tidal river, in the rising floods of which Maggie and her brother are drowned, — a favorite way with the author in disposing of her heroes and heroines when she can no longer manage them.

The secondary characters of this novel are numerous, varied, and natural, and described with great felicity and humor. None of them are interesting people; in fact, most of them are very uninteresting, — vulgar, money-loving, material, purse-proud, selfish, such as are seen among those to whom money and worldly prosperity are everything, with no perception of what is lofty and disinterested, and on whom grand sentiments are lost, — yet kind-hearted in the main, and in the case of the Dobsons redeemed by a sort of family pride. The moral of the story is the usual one with George Eliot, — the conflict of duty with passion.

and the inexorable fate which pursues the sinner. She brings out the power of conscience as forcibly as Hawthorne has done in his "Scarlet Letter."

The "Mill on the Floss" was soon followed by "Silas Marner," regarded by some as the gem of George Eliot's novels, and which certainly — though pathetic and sad, as all her novels are — does not leave on the mind so mournful an impression, since in its outcome we see redemption. The principal character — the poor, neglected, forlorn weaver — emerges at length from the Everlasting Nay into the Everlasting Yea; and he emerges by the power of love, — love for a little child whom he has rescued from the snow, the storm, and death. Driven by injustice to a solitary life, to abject penury, to despair, the solitary miser, gloating over his gold pieces, — which he has saved by the hardest privation, and in which he trusts, — finds himself robbed, without redress or sympathy; but in the end he is consoled for his loss in the love he bestows on a helpless orphan, who returns it with the most noble disinterestedness, and lives to be his solace and his pride. Nothing more touching has ever been written by man or woman than this short story, as full of pathos as "Adam Bede" is full of humor.

What is remarkable in this story is that the plot is exactly similar to that of "Jermola the Potter," the

masterpiece of a famous Polish novelist, — a marvellous coincidence, or plagiarism, difficult to be explained. But Shakspeare, the most original of men, borrowed some of his plots from Italian writers; and Mirabeau appropriated the knowledge of men more learned than he, which by felicity of genius he made his own; and Webster, too, did the same thing. There is nothing new under the sun, except in the way of "putting things."

After the publication of the various novels pertaining to the rural and humble life of England, with which George Eliot was so well acquainted, into which she entered with so much sympathy, and which she so marvellously portrayed, she took a new departure, entering a field with which she was not so well acquainted, and of which she could only learn through books. The result was "Romola," the most ambitious, and in some respects the most remarkable, of all her works. It certainly is the most learned and elaborate. It is a philosophico-historical novel, the scene of which is laid in Florence at the time of Savonarola, — the period called the Renaissance, when art and literature were revived with great enthusiasm; a very interesting period, the glorious morning, as it were, of modern civilization.

This novel, the result of reading and reflection, necessarily called into exercise other faculties besides accu-

rate observation, — even imagination and invention, for which she is not pre-eminently distinguished. In this novel, though interesting and instructive, we miss the humor and simplicity of the earlier works. It is overloaded with learning. Not one intelligent reader in a hundred has ever heard even the names of many of the eminent men to whom she alludes. It is full of digressions, and of reflections on scientific theories. Many of the chapters are dry and pedantic. It is too philosophical to be popular, too learned to be appreciated. As in some of her other stories, highly improbable events take place. The plot is not felicitous, and the ending is unsatisfactory. The Italian critics of the book are not, on the whole, complimentary. George Eliot essayed to do, with prodigious labor, what she had no special aptitude for. Carlyle in ten sentences would have made a more graphic picture of Savonarola. None of her historical characters stand out with the vividness with which Scott represented Queen Elizabeth and Mary, Queen of Scots, or with which even Bulwer painted Rienzi and the last of the Barons.

Critics do not admire historical novels, because they are neither history nor fiction. They mislead readers on important issues, and they are not so interesting as the masterpieces of Macaulay and Froude. Yet they have their uses. They give a superficial knowledge of great characters to those who will not read

history. The field of history is too vast for ordinary people, who have no time for extensive reading even if they have the inclination.

The great historical personage whom George Eliot paints in "Romola" is Savonarola,—and I think faithfully, on the whole. In the main she coincides with Villani, the greatest authority. In some respects I should take issue with her. She makes the religion of the Florentine reformer to harmonize with her notions of self-renunciation. She makes him preach the "religion of humanity," which was certainly not taught in his day. He preached duty, indeed, and appealed to conscience; but he preached duty to God rather than to man. The majesty of a personal God, fearful in judgment and as represented by the old Jewish prophets, was the great idea of Savonarola's theology. His formula was something like this: "Punishment for sin is a divine judgment, not the effect of inexorable laws. Repentance is a necessity. Unless men repent of their sins, God will punish them. Unless Italy repents, it will be desolated by His vengeance." Catholic theology, which he never departed from, has ever recognized the supreme allegiance of man to his Maker, because *He* demands it. Even among the Jesuits, with their corrupted theology, the motto emblazoned on their standard was, *Ad majorem dei gloriam*. But the great Dominican preacher is

made by George Eliot to be "the spokesman of humanity made divine, not of Deity made human." "Make your marriage vows," said he to Romola, "an offering to the great work by which sin and sorrow are made to cease."

But Savonarola is only a secondary character in the novel. He might as well have been left out altogether. The real hero and heroine are Romola and Tito; and they are identified with the life of the period, which is the Renaissance, — a movement more Pagan than Christian. These two characters may be called creations. Romola is an Italian woman, supposed to represent a learned and noble lady four hundred years ago. She has lofty purposes and aspirations; she is imbued with the philosophy of self-renunciation; her life is devoted to others, — first to her father, and then to humanity. But she is as cold as marble; she is the very reverse of Corinne. Even her love for Tito is made to vanish away on the first detection of his insincerity, although he is her husband. She becomes as hard and implacable as fate; and when she ceases to love her husband, she hates him and leaves him and is only brought back by a sense of duty. Yet her hatred is incurable; and in her wretched disappointment she finds consolation only in a sort of stoicism. How far George Eliot's notions of immortality are brought out in the spiritual experiences of Romola I do not

know; but the immortality of Romola is not that which is brought to light by the gospel: it is a vague and indefinite sentiment kindred to that of Indian sages, — that we live hereafter only in our teachings or deeds; that we are absorbed in the universal whole; that our immortality is the living in the hearts and minds of men, not personally hereafter among the redeemed. To quote her own fine thought, —

> "Oh, may I join the choir invisible
> In pulses stirred to generosity,
> In deeds of daring rectitude, in scorn
> For miserable aims that end in self,
> In thoughts sublime that pierce the night like stars,
> And, with their mild persistence, urge man's search
> To vaster issues!"

Tito is a more natural character, good-natured, kind-hearted, with generous impulses. He is interesting in spite of his faults; he is accomplished, versatile, and brilliant. But he is inherently selfish, and has no moral courage. He gradually, in his egotism, becomes utterly false and treacherous, though not an ordinary villain. He is the creature of circumstances. His weakness leads to falsehood, and falsehood ends in crime; which crime pursues him with unrelenting vengeance, — not the agonies of remorse, for he has no conscience, but the vindictive and persevering hatred of his foster father, whom he robbed. The vengeance of Baldassare is almost preternatural; it surpasses the

wrath of Achilles and the malignity of Shylock. It is the wrath of a demon, from which there is no escape: it would be tragical if the subject of it were greater. Though Tito perishes in an improbable way, he is yet the victim of the inexorable law of human souls.

But if "Romola" has faults, it has remarkable excellences. In this book George Eliot aspires to be a teacher of ethics and philosophy. She is not humorous, but intensely serious and thoughtful. She sometimes discourses like Epictetus:—

"And so, my Lillo," says she at the conclusion, "if you mean to act nobly, and seek to know the best things God has put within reach of man, you must learn to fix your mind on that end, and not on what will happen to you because of it. And remember, if you were to choose something lower, and make it the rule of your life to seek your own pleasure and escape what is disagreeable, calamity might come just the same; and it would be a calamity falling on a base mind, — which is the one form of sorrow that has no balm in it, and that may well make a man say, 'It would have been better for me if I had never been born.'"

Three years elapsed between the publication of "Romola" and that of "Felix Holt," which shows to what a strain the mind of George Eliot had been subjected in elaborating an historical novel. She now returns to her own peculiar field, in which her great successes had been made, and with which she was familiar; and yet

even in her own field we miss now the genial humanity and inimitable humor of her earlier novels. In "Felix Holt" she deals with social and political problems in regard to which there is great difference of opinion; for the difficult questions of political economy have not yet been solved. Felix Holt is a political economist, but not a vulgar radical filled with discontent and envy. He is a mechanic, tolerably educated, and able to converse with intelligence on the projected reforms of the day, in cultivated language. He is high-minded and conscientious, but unpractical, and gets himself into difficulties, escaping penal servitude almost by miracle, for the crime of homicide. The heroine, Esther Lyon, is supposed to be the daughter of a Dissenting minister, who talks theology after the fashion of the divines of the seventeenth century; unknown to herself, however, she is really the daughter of the heir of large estates, and ultimately becomes acknowledged as such, but gives up wealth and social position to marry Felix Holt, who had made a vow of perpetual poverty. Such a self-renunciation is not common in England. Even a Paula would hardly have accepted such a lot; only one inspired with the philosophy of Marcus Aurelius would be capable of such a willing sacrifice, — very noble, but very improbable.

The most powerful part of the story is the description of the remorse which so often accompanies an illicit

love, as painted in the proud, stately, stern, unbending, aristocratic Mrs. Transome. "Though youth has faded, and joy is dead, and love has turned to loathing, yet memory, like a relentless fury, pursues the gray-haired woman who hides within her breast a heavy load of shame and dread." Illicit love is a common subject with George Eliot; and it is always represented as a mistake or crime, followed by a terrible retribution, sooner or later, — if not outwardly, at least inwardly, in the sorrows of a wounded and heavy-laden soul.

No one of George Eliot's novels opens more beautifully than "Felix Holt," though there is the usual disappointment of readers with the close. And probably no description of a rural district in the Midland Counties fifty years ago has ever been painted which equals in graphic power the opening chapter. The old coach turnpike, the roadside inns brilliant with polished tankards, the pretty bar-maids, the repartees of jocose hostlers, the mail-coach announced by the many blasts of the bugle, the green willows of the water-courses, the patient cart-horses, the full-uddered cows, the rich pastures, the picturesque milkmaids, the shepherd with his slouching walk, the laborer with his bread and bacon, the tidy kitchen-garden, the golden corn-ricks, the bushy hedgerows bright with the blossoms of the wild convolvulus, the comfortable parsonage, the old parish church with its ivy-mantled towers, the thatched

cottage with double daisies and geraniums in the window-seats, — these and other details bring before our minds a rural glory which has passed away before the power of steam, and may never again return.

"Felix Holt" was published in 1866, and it was five years before "Middlemarch" appeared, — a very long novel, thought by some to be the best which George Eliot has written; read fifteen times, it is said, by the Prince of Wales. In this novel the author seems to have been ambitious to sustain her fame. She did not, like Trollope, dash off three novels a year, and all alike. She did not write mechanically, as a person grinds at a mill. Nor was she greedy of money, to be spent in running races with the rich. She was a conscientious writer from first to last. Yet "Middlemarch," with all the labor spent upon it, has more faults than any of her preceding novels. It is as long as "The History of Sir Charles Grandison;" it has a miserable plot; it has many tedious chapters, and too many figures, and too much theorizing on social science. Rather than a story, it is a panorama of the doctors and clergymen and lawyers and business people who live in a provincial town, with their various prejudices and passions and avocations. It is not a cheerful picture of human life. We are brought to see an unusual number of misers, harpies, quacks, cheats, and hypocrites. There

are but few interesting characters in it: Dorothea is the most so, — a very noble woman, but romantic, and making great mistakes. She desires to make herself useful to somebody, and marries a narrow, jealous, aristocratic pedant, who had spent his life in elaborate studies on a dry and worthless subject. Of course, she awakes from her delusion when she discovers what a small man, with great pretensions, her learned husband is; but she remains in her dreariness of soul a generous, virtuous, and dutiful woman. She does not desert her husband because she does not love him, or because he is uncongenial, but continues faithful to the end. Like Maggie Tulliver and Romola, she has lofty aspirations, but marries, after her husband's death, a versatile, brilliant, shallow Bohemian, as ill-fitted for her serious nature as the dreary Casaubon himself.

Nor are we brought in sympathy with Lydgate, the fashionable doctor with grand aims, since he allows his whole scientific aspirations to be defeated by a selfish and extravagant wife. Rosamond Vincy is, however, one of the best drawn characters in fiction, such as we often see, — pretty, accomplished, clever, but incapable of making a sacrifice, secretly thwarting her husband, full of wretched complaints, utterly insincere, attractive perhaps to men, but despised by women. Caleb Garth is a second Adam Bede; and Mrs. Cadwallader, the aristocratic wife of the rector, is a second Mrs. Poyser

in the glibness of her tongue and in the thriftiness of her ways. Mr. Bullstrode, the rich banker, is a character we unfortunately sometimes find in a large country town, — a man of varied charities, a pillar of the Church, but as full of cant as an egg is of meat; in fact, a hypocrite and a villain, ultimately exposed and punished.

The general impression left on the mind from reading "Middlemarch" is sad and discouraging. In it is brought out the blended stoicism, humanitarianism, Buddhism, and agnosticism of the author. She paints the "struggle of noble natures, struggling vainly against the currents of a poor kind of world, without trust in an invisible Rock higher than themselves to which they could entreat to be lifted up."

In another five years George Eliot produced "Daniel Deronda," the last and most unsatisfactory of her great novels, written in feeble health and with exhausted nervous energies, as she was passing through the shadows of the evening of her life. In this work she doubtless essayed to do her best; but she could not always surpass herself, any more than could Scott or Dickens. Nor is she to be judged by those productions which reveal her failing strength, but by those which were written in the fresh enthusiasm of a lofty soul. No one thinks the less of Milton because the "Paradise Regained" is not equal to the "Paradise

Lost." Many are the immortal poets who are now known only for two or three of their minor poems. It takes a Michael Angelo to paint his grandest frescos after reaching eighty years of age; or a Gladstone, to make his best speeches when past the age of seventy. Only people with a wonderful physique and unwasted mental forces can go on from conquering to conquer, — people, moreover, who have reserved their strength, and lived temperate and active lives.

Although "Daniel Deronda" is occasionally brilliant, and laboriously elaborated, still it is regarded generally by the critics as a failure. The long digression on the Jews is not artistic; and the subject itself is uninteresting, especially to the English, who have inveterate prejudices against the chosen people. The Hebrews, as they choose to call themselves, are doubtless a remarkable people, and have marvellously preserved their traditions and their customs. Some among them have arisen to the foremost rank in scholarship, statesmanship, and finance. They have entered, at different times, most of the cabinets of Europe, and have held important chairs in its greatest universities. But it was a Utopian dream that sent Daniel Deronda to the Orient to collect together the scattered members of his race. Nor are enthusiasts and proselytes often found among the Jews. We see talent, but not visionary dreamers. To the English they appear as peculiarly

practical, — bent on making money, sensual in their pleasures, and only distinguished from the people around them by an extravagant love of jewelry and a proud and cynical rationalism. Yet in justice it must be confessed, that some of the most interesting people in the world are Jews.

In "Daniel Deronda" the cheerless philosophy of George Eliot is fully brought out. Mordecai, in his obscure and humble life, is a good representative of a patient sufferer, but "in his views and aspirations is a sort of Jewish Mazzini." The hero of the story is Mordecai's disciple, who has discovered his Hebrew origin, of which he is as proud as his aristocratic mother is ashamed. The heroine is a spoiled woman of fashion, who makes the usual mistake of most of George Eliot's heroines, in violating conscience and duty. She marries a man whom she knows to be inherently depraved and selfish; marries him for his money, and pays the usual penalty, — a life of silent wretchedness and secret sorrow and unavailing regret. But she is at last fortunately delivered by the accidental death of her detested husband, — by drowning, of course. Remorse in seeing her murderous wishes accomplished — though not by her own hand, but by pursuing fate — awakens a new life in her soul, and she is redeemed amid the throes of anguish and conscious guilt

"Theophrastus Such," the last work of George Eliot, is not a novel, but a series of character sketches, full of unusual bitterness and withering sarcasm. Thackeray never wrote anything so severe. It is one of the most cynical books ever written by man or woman. There is as much difference in tone and spirit between it and "Adam Bede," as between "Proverbs" and "Ecclesiastes;" as between "Sartor Resartus" and the "Latter-Day Pamphlets." And this difference is not more marked than the difference in style and language between this and her earlier novels. Critics have been unanimous in their admiration of the author's style in "Silas Marner" and "The Mill on the Floss,"—so clear, direct, simple, natural; as faultless as Swift, Addison, and Goldsmith, those great masters of English prose, whose fame rests as much on their style as on their thoughts. In "Theophrastus Such," on the contrary, as in some parts of "Daniel Deronda," the sentences are long, involved, and often almost unintelligible.

In presenting the works of George Eliot, I have confined myself to her prose productions, since she is chiefly known by her novels. But she wrote poetry also, and some critics have seen considerable merit in it. Yet whatever merit it may have I must pass without notice. I turn from the criticism of her novels, as they successively appeared, to allude briefly to her

closing days. Her health began to fail when she was writing "Middlemarch," doubtless from her intense and continual studies, which were a severe strain on her nervous system. It would seem that she led a secluded life, rarely paying visits, but receiving at her house distinguished literary and scientific men. She was fond of travelling on the Continent, and of making short visits to the country. In conversation she is said to have been witty, tolerant, and sympathetic. Poetry, music, and art absorbed much of her attention. She read very little contemporaneous fiction, and seldom any criticisms on her own productions. For an unbeliever in historical Christianity, she had great reverence for all earnest Christian peculiarities, from Roman Catholic asceticism to Methodist fervor. In her own belief she came nearest to the positivism of Comte, although he was not so great an oracle to her as he was to Mr. Lewes, with whom twenty years were passed by her in congenial studies and labors. They were generally seen together at the opening night of a new play or the *début* of a famous singer or actor, and sometimes, within a limited circle, they attended a social or literary reunion.

In 1878 George Eliot lost the companion of her literary life. And yet two years afterward — at the age of fifty-nine — she surprised her friends by marrying John Walter Cross, a man much younger than herself. No

one can fathom that mystery. But Mrs. Cross did not long enjoy the felicities of married life. In six months from her marriage, after a pleasant trip to the Continent, she took cold in attending a Sunday concert in London; and on the 22d of December, 1880, she passed away from earth to join her "choir invisible," whose thoughts have enriched the world.

It is not extravagant to say that George Eliot left no living competitor equal to herself in the realm of fiction. I do not myself regard her as great a novelist as Scott or Thackeray; but critics generally place her second only to those great masters in this department of literature. How long her fame will last, who can tell? Admirers and rhetoricians say, "as long as the language in which her books are written." She doubtless will live as long as any English novelist; but do those who amuse live like those who save? Will the witty sayings of Dickens be cherished like the almost inspired truths of Plato, of Bacon, of Burke? Nor is popularity a sure test of posthumous renown.

The question for us to settle is, not whether George Eliot as a writer is immortal, but whether she has rendered services that her country and mankind will value. She has undoubtedly added to the richness of English literature. She has deeply interested and instructed her generation. Thousands, and hundreds of thousands, owe to her a debt of gratitude for the enjoy

ment she has afforded them. How many an idle hour has she not beguiled! How many have felt the artistic delight she has given them, like those who have painted beautiful pictures! As already remarked, we read her descriptions of rural character and life as we survey the masterpieces of Hogarth and Wilkie.

It is for her delineation of character, and for profound psychological analysis, that her writings have permanent value. She is a faithful copyist of Nature. She recalls to our minds characters whom everybody of large experience has seen in his own village or town,—the conscientious clergyman, and the minister who preaches like a lecturer; the angel who lifts up, and the sorceress who pulls down. We recall the misers we have scorned, and the hypocrites whom we have detested. We see on her canvas the vulgar rich and the struggling poor, the pompous man of success and the broken-down man of misfortune; philanthropists and drunkards, lofty heroines and silly butterflies, benevolent doctors and smiling politicians, quacks and scoundrels and fools, mixed up with noble men and women whose aspirations are for a higher life; people of kind impulses and weak wills, of attractive personal beauty with meanness of mind and soul. We do not find exaggerated monsters of vice, or faultless models of virtue and wisdom: we see such people as live in every Christian community. True it is that the impression we receive

of human life is not always pleasant; but who in any community can bear the severest scrutiny of neighbors? It is this fidelity to our poor humanity which tinges the novels of George Eliot with so deep a gloom.

But the sadness which creeps over us in view of human imperfection is nothing to that darkness which enters the soul when the peculiar philosophical or theological opinions of this gifted woman are insidiously but powerfully introduced. However great she was as a delineator of character, she is not an oracle as a moral teacher. She was steeped in the doctrines of modern agnosticism. She did not believe in a personal God, nor in His superintending providence, nor in immortality as brought to light in the gospel. There are some who do not accept historical Christianity, but are pervaded with its spirit. Even Carlyle, when he cast aside the miracles of Christ and his apostles as the honest delusions of their followers, was almost a Calvinist in his recognition of God as a sovereign power; and he abhorred the dreary materialism of Comte and Mill as much as he detested the shallow atheism of Diderot and Helvetius. But George Eliot went beyond Carlyle in disbelief. At times, especially in her poetry, she writes almost like a follower of Buddha. The individual soul is absorbed in the universal whole; future life has no certainty; hope in redemption is buried in a sepulchre; life in most cases is a futile struggle;

the great problems of existence are invested with gloom as well as mystery. Thus she discourses like a Pagan. She would have us to believe that Theocritus was wiser than Pascal; that Marcus Aurelius was as good as Saint Paul.

Hence, as a teacher of morals and philosophy George Eliot is not of much account. We question the richness of any moral wisdom which is not in harmony with the truths that Christian people regard as fundamental, and which they believe will save the world. In some respects she has taught important lessons. She has illustrated the power of conscience and the sacredness of duty. She was a great preacher of the doctrine that "whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." She showed that those who do not check and control the first departure from virtue will, in nine cases out of ten, hopelessly fall.

These are great certitudes. But there are others which console and encourage as well as intimidate. The *Te Domine Speravi* of the dying Xavier on the desolate island of Sancian, pierced through the clouds of dreary blackness which enveloped the nations he sought to save. Christianity is full of promises of exultant joy, and its firmest believers are those whose lives are gilded with its divine radiance. Surely, it is not intellectual or religious narrowness which causes us to regret that so gifted a woman as George Eliot — so

justly regarded as one of the greatest ornaments of modern literature — should have drifted away from the Rock which has resisted the storms and tempests of nearly two thousand years, and abandoned, if she did not scorn, the faith which has animated the great masters of thought from Augustine to Bossuet. "The stern mournfulness which is produced by most of her novels gives us the idea of one who does not know, or who has forgotten, that the stone was rolled away from the heart of the world on the morning when Christ arose from the tomb."

AUTHORITIES.

Miss Blind's Life of George Eliot. Mr. Cross's Life of George Eliot. I regret to say, did not reach me until after the foregoing pages had gone to press. But as this lecture is criticism rather than history, the few additional facts that might have been gained would not be important; while, after tracing in that *quasi*-autobiography the development of her mental and moral nature, I see no reason to change my conclusions based on the outward facts of her life and on her works. The Nineteenth Century, ix.; London Quarterly Review, lvii. 40; Contemporary Review, xx. 29, 39; The National Review, xxxi. 23, 16; Blackwood's Magazine, cxxix. 85–100, 112, 116, 103; Edinburgh Review, cx. 144, 124, 137, 150. Westminster Review, lxxi. 110, lxxxvi. 74, 80, 90, 112. Dublin Review, clvii. 88, 89; Cornhill Magazine, xliii.; Atlantic Monthly, xxxviii. 18. Fortnightly Review, xxvi. 19; British Quarterly Review, lxiv. 57, 48, 45. International Review, iv. 10; Temple Bar Magazine, 49; Littell's Living Age, cxlviii.; The North American Review, ciii. 116, 107; Quarterly Review, xxxiv. 108; Macmillan's Magazine, iii. 4; North British Review, xlv.

PART II.

GREAT RULERS.

CONTENTS.

ALFRED THE GREAT.

The Saxons in England.

	Page
The early Saxons	25
Their conquest of England	28
Division of England into petty kingdoms	29
Conversion of the Saxons	30
The Saxon bishoprics	31
Early distinguished men	32
Isadore, Cædmon, and Bæda, or Bede	32
Birth and early life of Alfred	33
Succession to the throne of Wessex	35
Danish invasions	36
Humiliation and defeat of Alfred	36
His subsequent conquests	38
Final settlement of the Danes	39
Alfred fortifies his kingdom	41
Reorganizes the army and navy	42
His naval successes	44
Renewed Danish invasions	45
The laws of Alfred	46
Their severity	47
Alfred's judicial reforms	50
Establishment of shires and parishes	50
Administrative reforms	51

PAGE

Financial resources of Alfred 52
His efforts in behalf of education 53
His literary labors 54
Final defeat of the Danes 56
Death and character of Alfred 58
His services to civilization 59
Authorities 62

QUEEN ELIZABETH.

WOMAN AS A SOVEREIGN.

The reign of Queen Elizabeth associated with progress . . 66
Her birth and education 67
Her trials of the heart 68
Her critical situation during the reign of Mary 69
Her expediences 69
Her dissembling 70
State of the kingdom on her accession to the throne . . . 72
Rudeness and loyalty of the people 75
Difficulties of the Queen 76
The policy she pursued 77
Her able ministers 79
Lord Burleigh 79
Archbishop Parker 80
Favorites of Elizabeth 81
The establishment of the Church of England 82
Its adaptation to the wants of the nation 83
Religious persecution 84
Development of national resources 86
Pacific policy of the government 87
Administration of justice 88
Hatred of war 89
Glory of Elizabeth allied with the prosperity of England . . 90

PAGE
Good government 91
Royal economy 92
Charge of tyranny considered 92
Power of Parliament 93
Mary, Queen of Scots 94
Palliating circumstances for her execution 95
Character of Mary Stuart 96
Her plots and intrigues 97
The execution of Essex 98
Other charges against Elizabeth 99
Her coquetry 100
Her defects 100
Her virtues 101
Her public services 102
Her great fame 103
Her influence contrasted with power 103
Verdict of Lord Bacon 104
Elizabethan era 104
Constellation of men of genius 105

HENRY OF NAVARRE.

THE HUGUENOTS.

The Cause and the Hero 109
The sixteenth century contrasted with the nineteenth . . 110
A New Spirit in the world 111
Differences of progress 112
Religious, civil, and social upheavals 113
John Calvin 114
Reformed doctrines in France 115
Persecution of the Huguenots 116
They arm in self-defence to secure religious liberty . . . 117
Henry of Navarre 118
Jeanne D'Albret 119

PAGE
Education of Henry 120
Coligny 121
Slaughter of St. Bartholomew 122
The Duke of Guise, Catherine de Medicis, and Charles IX. 123
Effects of the massacre 124
Responsibility for it 125
Stand taken by the Protestants 126
They retire to La Rochelle 127
Bravery and ability of Henry 128
Battle of Coutras 129
Battle of Ivry 130
Abjuration of Henry IV. 132
His motives 133
The ceremony 134
Edict of Nantes 135
Henry's service to France 136
Effects of the Abjuration of Henry IV. on the Huguenots . 137
Character of Henry 139, 140

GUSTAVUS ADOLPHUS.

THIRTY YEARS' WAR.

The Thirty Years' War a political necessity 143
Agitation which succeeded the death of Luther 144
Brilliancy of the period 145
Persecution of the Protestants 145
Ferdinand II. 146
Bohemia 147
Its insurrection 147
Renewed persecution 148
Its success 149
Elector Count Palatine 150
Rallying of German princes against the Emperor . . . 150

PAGE
Wallenstein 151
His successful warfare 152
Consternation of Germany 153
Gustavus Adolphus comes to its relief 154
Character of Gustavus Adolphus 155
His brilliant exploits 157
Balance of power 160
Dismissal and recall of Wallenstein 165
The contending forces 167
Battle of Lutzen 171
Death of Gustavus Adolphus 172
Peace of Westphalia 173
Its political consequences 175
Ultimate effects of the Thirty Years' War 175–177

CARDINAL RICHELIEU.

ABSOLUTISM.

State of France in the 17th Century 182
Elevation of Richelieu 185
He perceives the great necessities of the State 187
Makes himself necessary to Louis XIII. 188
His aims as Prime Minister 191
His executive ability 192
His remorseless tyranny 193
His warfare on the Huguenots 194
Aims of the Huguenots 195
La Rochelle 196
Fall of the Huguenots 196
Character of the Nobility; their decimation 197
The Queen-Mother 198
The Duke of Orleans 199
The justification of Richelieu 199

PAGE
The Parliaments 200
Their hostilities 201
Their humiliation 202
The policy of Richelieu 203
His services to the Crown 204
His internal improvements 204
His defects of character 205
Necessity of absolutism amid treasons and anarchies . . 206
Abuse of absolutism 207

OLIVER CROMWELL.

ENGLISH REVOLUTION.

The Puritans 212
Their peculiarities 213
Love of Civil Liberty 213
Charles I. and his ministers 214
Laud 215
Strafford 215
Tyranny of the King 216
Persecution of the Puritans 216
Petition of Right 217
Reforms 217
The Parliament 218
Contest between the King and Parliament 218
War and Revolution 218
Characteristics of the Age 219
Rise of Cromwell 219
His military genius 221
Battle of Naseby 222
Of Preston 222
Conquest of Scotland 223
Execution of Charles I. 223

PAGE

A war measure 224
The Independents gain ascendency 225
Conquest of Ireland 227
Cromwell made Protector of the army 228
Military despotism 229
Motives of Cromwell 230
His great abilities as a ruler 234
His services to England 235
Greatness of England under Cromwell 236
Cromwell contrasted with Louis XIV. 237
His intellectual defects 239
His death 240
Cromwell as an instrument of Providence 241
Occasional necessity of absolutism 242
Ultimate effect of Cromwell's rule 244

LOUIS XIV.

THE FRENCH MONARCHY.

Illustrious men on the accession of Louis XIV. 251
State of France 251
Ambition of Louis XIV. 252
His love of military glory 252
His character 253
His inherited greatness 256
His alliance with the Church 258
His unbounded power 260
His great ministers 261
Colbert 262
Aims of Colbert 263
His great services 263
Louvois 264
His great executive abilities 264

PAGE

The first war of Louis XIV. 265
Conquest of Flanders 266
Its iniquity 267
Invasion of Holland 268
Easy victories 269
Rise of William of Nassau 270
Prevents the conquest of Holland 270
Peace of Nimeguen 271
Louis in the zenith of power 272
His aggrandizement 273
His palaces 274
His court 274
His mistresses 275
His friendship with Madame de Maintenon 276
Elevation of Maintenon 276
Religious persecution 277
Revocation of the Edict of Nantes 278
Coalition against Louis XIV. 281
Unfortunate wars 283–286
Humiliation 287
His death 288
Effects of his reign in France 289

LOUIS XV.

REMOTE CAUSES OF REVOLUTION.

Long reign of Louis XV. 294
Decline of French military power 295
Loss of colonial possessions 295
Cardinal Fleury 296
Duke of Orleans 296
Derangement of the finances 297
Injustice of feudal privileges 298

PAGE
John Law 298
Mississippi scheme 299
Bursting of the bubble 300
Excessive taxation 301
Worthlessness of the nobility 303
Their effeminacy and hypocrisy 304
Character of the King 306
Corruption of his court 307
The Jesuits 309
Death of the King 310
The reign of court mistresses 311
Madame de Pompadour 312
Extravagance of the aristocracy 315
Improvements of Paris 316
Fall of the Jesuits 317–322
The Philosophers and their writings, — Voltaire, Rousseau 325
Accumulating miseries and disgraceful government . . . 327

PETER THE GREAT.

His Services to Russia.

State of Russia on the accession of Peter the Great . . . 331
The necessity for a great ruler to arise 332
Early days of the Czar Peter 333
Accession to the throne 333
Lefort 335
Origin of a navy 337
Seizure of Azof 340
Military reform 342
Peter sets out on his travels 343
Works as a carpenter in Holland 344
Mentchikof 345
Peter visits England 346

PAGE

Visits Vienna 347
Completion of the apprenticeship of Peter 347
He abolishes the Streltzi 348
Various other reforms 349
Opposition of the clergy 350
War with Charles XII. of Sweden 351
Battle of Narva 351
Siege of Pultowa 352
Peter invades Turkey 352
His imprudence and rashness 353
Saved by the sagacity of his wife Catherine 353
Foundation of St. Petersburg 354
Second tour of Europe 357
Misconduct and fate of Alexis 358
Coronation of Catherine I. 362
Character of Peter 363
His great services to Russia 364

FREDERIC THE GREAT.

THE PRUSSIAN POWER.

Characteristics of the man 369
Education of Frederic II. 370
His character 371
Becomes King 372
Seizure of a part of Liège 373
Seizure of Silesia 374
Maria Theresa 375
Visit of Voltaire 376
Friendship between Voltaire and Frederic 377
Coalition against Frederic 378
Seven Years' War 379
Carlyle's History of Frederic 380

PAGE
Empress Elizabeth of Russia 382
Decisive battles of Rossbach, Luthen, and Zorndorf . . 386
Heroism and fortitude of Frederic 387
Results of the Seven Years' War 389–391
Partition of Poland 392
Development of the resources of Prussia 394
Public improvements 395
General services of Frederic to his country 396
His character 397
His ultimate influence 398–404

ALFRED THE GREAT.

A. D. 849–901.

THE SAXONS IN ENGLAND.

BEACON LIGHTS OF HISTORY.

ALFRED THE GREAT

THE SAXONS IN ENGLAND

ALFRED is one of the most interesting characters in all history for those blended virtues and talents which remind us of a David, a Marcus Aurelius, or a Saint Louis, — a man whom everybody loved, whose deeds were a boon, whose graces were a radiance, and whose words were a benediction; alike a saint, a poet, a warrior, and a statesman. He ruled a little kingdom, but left a great name, second only to Charlemagne, among the civilizers of his people and nation in the Middle Ages. As a man of military genius he yields to many of the kings of England, to say nothing of the heroes of ancient and modern times.

When he was born, A.D. 849, the Saxons had occupied Britain, or England, about four hundred years, having conquered it from the old Celtic inhabitants soon after the Romans had retired to defend their own imperial capital from the Goths. Like the Goths, Vandals, Franks, Burgundians, Lombards, and Heruli, the

Saxons belonged to the same Teutonic race, whose remotest origin can be traced to Central Asia, — kindred, indeed, to the early inhabitants of Italy and Greece, whom we call Indo-European, or Aryan. These Saxons — one of the fiercest tribes of the Teutonic barbarians — lived, before the invasion of Britain, in that part of Europe which we now call Schleswig, in the heart of the peninsula which parts the Baltic from the northern seas; also in those parts of Germany which now belong to Hanover and Oldenburg. It does not appear from the best authorities that these tribes — called Engle, Saxon, and Jute — wandered about seeking a precarious living, but they were settled in villages, in the government of which we trace the germs of the subsequent social and political institutions of England. The social centre was the homestead of the *æthéling* or *eorl*, distinguished from his fellow-villagers by his greater wealth and nobler blood, and held by them in hereditary reverence. From him and his brother-æthelings the leaders of a warlike expedition were chosen. He alone was armed with spear and sword, and his long hair floated in the wind. He was bound to protect his kinsmen from wrong and injustice. The land which inclosed the village, whether reserved for pasture, wood, or tillage, was undivided, and every free villager had the right of turning his cattle and swine upon it, and also of sharing in the division of the harvest. The

basis of the life was agricultural. Our Saxon ancestors in Germany did not subsist exclusively by hunting or fishing, although these pursuits were not neglected. They were as skilful with the plough and mattock as they were in steering a boat or hunting a deer or pursuing a whale. They were coarse in their pleasures, but religious in their turn of mind; Pagans, indeed, but worshipping the powers of Nature with poetic ardor. They were born warriors, and their passion for the sea led to adventurous enterprise. Before the close of the third century their boats, driven by fifty oars, had been seen in the British waters; and after the Romans had left the Britons to defend themselves against the Scots and Picts, the harassed rulers of the land invoked the aid of these Saxon pirates, and, headed by two ealdormen, — Hengist and Horsa, — they landed on the Isle of Thanet in the year 449.

These two chieftains are the earliest traditionary heroes of the Saxons in England. Their mercenary work was soon done, and after it was done they had no idea of retiring to their own villages in Germany. They cast their greedy eyes on richer pastures and more fruitful fields. Brother-pirates flocked from the Elbe and Rhine to their settlement in Thanet. In forty-five years after Hengist and Horsa landed, Cerdic with a more formidable band had taken possession of a large part of the southern coast, and pushed his way to

Winchester and founded the kingdom of Wessex. But the work of conquest was slow. It took seventy years for the Saxons to become masters of Kent, Sussex, Hampshire, Essex, and Wessex.

A stout resistance to the invading Saxons had been made by the native Britons, headed by Arthur, — a legendary hero, who is thought to have lived near the close of the fifth century. His deeds and those of the knights of the Round Table form the subject of one of the most interesting romances of the Middle Ages, probably written in the brightest age of chivalry, and by a monk very ignorant of history, since he gives many Norman names to his characters. But all the valor of the Celtic hero and his chivalrous followers was of no avail before the fierce and persistent attacks of a hardier race, bent on the possession of a fairer land than their own.

We know but little of the details of the various conflicts until Britain was finally won by these predatory tribes of barbarians. The stubborn resistance of the Britons led to their final retreat or complete extermination, and with their disappearance also perished what remained of the Roman civilization. The resistance of the Britons was much more obstinate than that of any of the other provinces of the Empire; but, as the forces arrayed against them were comparatively small, the work of conquest was slow. "It took thirty years to win

Kent alone, and sixty to complete the conquest of south Britain, and nearly two hundred to subdue the whole island." But when the conquest was made it was complete, and England was Saxon, in language, in institutions, and in manners; while France retained much of the language, habits, and institutions of the Romans, and even of the old Gaulish elements of society. England became a German nation on the complete wreck of everything Roman, whose peculiar characteristic was the freedom of those who tilled the land or gathered around the military standard of their chieftains. It was the gradual transfer of a whole German nation from the Elbe and Rhine to the Thames and the Humber, with their original village institutions, under the rule of their *eorls*, with the simple addition of kings,—unknown in their original settlements, but brought about by the necessities which military life and conquest produced.

After the conquest we find seven petty kings, who ruled in different parts of the island. Jealousies, wars, and marriages soon reduced their number to three, ruling over Wessex, Mercia, and Northumbria. All the people of these kingdoms were Pagan, the chief deity of whom was Woden. It was not till the middle of the seventh century that Christianity was introduced into Wessex, although Kent and Northumbria received Christian missionaries half-a-century earlier. The beau-

tiful though well-known tradition of the incidents which led to the introduction of the Christian religion deserves a passing mention. About the middle of the sixth century some Saxons taken in war, in one of the quarrels of rival kings, and hence made slaves, were exposed for sale in Rome. Gregory the Great, then simply deacon, passing by the market-place, observed their fair faces, white bodies, blue eyes, and golden hair, and inquired of the slave-dealer who they were. "They are English, or Angles." "No, not Angles," said the pious and poetic deacon; "they are angels, with faces so angelic. From what country did they come?" "From Deira." "*De Ira!* ay, plucked from God's wrath. What is the name of their king?" "Ella." "Ay, let alleluia be sung in their land." It need scarcely be added that when this pious and witty deacon became pope he remembered these Saxon slaves, and sent Augustin (or Austin, — not to be confounded with Augustine of Hippo, who lived nearly two centuries earlier), with forty monks as missionaries to convert the pagan Saxons. They established themselves in Kent A. D. 597, which became the seat of the first English bishopric, through the favor of the king, Æthelbert, whose wife Clotilda, a French princess, had been previously converted. Soon after, Essex followed the example of Kent; and then Northumbria. Wessex was the last of the Saxon kingdoms to be converted, their inhabitants being especially fierce and warlike.

It is singular that no traces of Christianity seem to have been left in Britain on the completion of the Saxon conquest, although it had been planted there as early as the time of Constantine. Helena was a Christian, and Pelagius and Celestine were British monks. But the Saxon conquest eradicated all that was left of Roman influence and institutions.

When Christianity had once acquired a foothold among the Saxons its progress was rapid. In no country were monastic institutions more firmly planted. Monasteries and churches were erected in the principal settlements and liberally endowed by the Saxon kings. In Kent were the great sees of Canterbury and Rochester; in Essex was London; in East Anglia was Norwich; in Wessex was Winchester; in Mercia were Lichfield, Leicester, Worcester, and Hereford; in Northumbria were York, Durham, and Ripon. Each cathedral had its schools and convents. Christianity became the law of the land, and entered largely into all the Saxon codes. There was a constant immigration of missionaries into Britain, and the great sees were filled with distinguished ecclesiastics, frequently from the continent, since a strong union was cemented between Rome and the English churches. Prince and prelate made frequent pilgrimages to the old capital of the world, and were received with distinguished honors. The monasteries were filled with princes and nobles and ladies of rank. As early

as the eighth century monasteries were enormously multiplied and enriched, for the piety of the Saxons assumed a monastic type. What civilization existed can be traced chiefly to the Church.

We read of only three great names among the Saxons who impressed their genius on the nation, until the various Saxon kingdoms were united under the sovereignty of Ecgberht, or Egbert, king of Wessex, about the middle of the ninth century. These were Theodore, Caedmon, and Bæda. The first was a monk from Tarsus, whom the Pope dispatched in the year 668 to Britain as Archbishop of Canterbury. To him the work of church organization was intrusted. He enlarged the number of the sees, and arranged them on the basis which was maintained for a thousand years. The subordination of priest to bishop and bishop to primate was more clearly defined by him. He also assembled councils for general legislation, which perhaps led the way to national parliaments. He not only organized the episcopate, but the parish system, and even the system of tithes has been by some attributed to him. The missionary who had been merely the chaplain of a nobleman became the priest of the manor or parish.

The second memorable man was born a cowherd; encouraged to sing his songs by the abbess Hilda, a "Northumbrian Deborah." When advanced in life he entered through her patronage a convent, and sang the

marvellous and touching stories of the Hebrew Scriptures, fixing their truths on the mind of the nation, and becoming the father of English poetry.

The third of these great men was the greatest, Bæda, — or Bede, as the name is usually spelled. He was a priest of the great abbey church of Weremouth, in Northumbria, and was a master of all the learning then known. He was the life of the famous school of Jarrow, and it is said that six hundred monks, besides strangers, listened to his teachings. His greatest work was an "Ecclesiastical History of the English Nation," which extends from the landing of Julius Cæsar to the year 731. He was the first English historian, and the founder of mediæval history, and all we know of the one hundred and fifty years after the landing of Augustin the missionary is drawn from him. He was not only historian, but theologian, — the father of the education of the English nation.

It was one hundred and fourteen years after the death of the "venerable Bede" before Alfred was born, A. D. 849, the youngest son of Æthelwulf, king of Wessex, who united under his rule all the Saxon kingdoms. The mother of Alfred was Osburgha, a German princess of extraordinary force of character. From her he received, at the age of four, the first rudiments of education, and learned to sing those Saxon ballads which he

afterwards recited with so much effect in the Danish camp. At the age of five Alfred was sent to Rome, probably to be educated, where he remained two years, visiting on his return the court of Charles the Bald, — the centre of culture in Western Europe. The celebrated Hincmar, Archbishop of Rheims, — the greatest churchman of the age, — was the most influential minister of the king; at whose table also sat John Erigena then engaged in a controversy with Gotteschalk, the German monk, about the presence of Christ in the eucharist, — the earliest notable theological controversy after the Patristic age. Alfred was too young to take an interest in this profound discussion; but he may perhaps have received an intellectual impulse from his visit to Rome and Paris, which affected his whole subsequent life.

About this time his father, over sixty years of age, married a French princess of the name of Judith, only fourteen years of age, — even in that rude age a great scandal, which nearly resulted in his dethronement. He lived but two years longer; and his youthful widow to the still greater scandal of the realm and Church married her late husband's eldest son, Ethelbald, who inherited the crown. It was through this woman, and her subsequent husband Baldwin, called *Bras de Fer*, Count of Flanders, that the English kings, since the Conqueror, trace their descent from Alfred and Charle-

magne; for her son, the second Count of Flanders, married Elfrida, the daughter of Alfred. From this union descended the Conqueror's wife Matilda. Thus the present royal family of England can trace a direct descent through William the Conqueror, Alfred, and Charlemagne, and is allied by blood, remotely indeed, with most of the reigning princes of Europe.

The three elder brothers of Alfred reigned successively over Wessex, — to whom all England owned allegiance. It was during their short reigns that the great invasion of the Danes took place, which reduced the whole island to desolation and misery. These Danes were of the same stock as the Saxons, but more enterprising and bold. It seems that they drove the Saxons before them, as the Saxons, three hundred years before, had driven the Britons. In their destructive ravages they sacked and burned Croyland, Peterborough, Huntington, Ely, and other wealthy abbeys, — the glory of the kingdom, — together with their valuable libraries.

It was then that Alfred (already the king's most capable general) began his reign, A. D. 871, at the age of twenty-three, on the death of his brother Ethelred, — a brave and pious prince, mortally wounded at the battle of Merton.

It was Alfred's memorable struggle with the Danes which gave to him his military fame. When he ascended

the throne these barbarians had gained a foothold, and in a few years nearly the whole of England was in their hands. Wave followed wave in the dreadful invasion; fleet after fleet and army after army was destroyed, and the Saxons were driven nearly to despair; for added to the evils of pillage and destruction were pestilence and famine, the usual attendants of desolating wars. In the year 878 the heroic leader of the disheartened people was compelled to hide himself, with a few faithful followers, in the forest of Selwood, amid the marshes of Somersetshire. Yet Alfred — a fugitive — succeeded at last in rescuing his kingdom of Wessex from the dominion of Pagan barbarians, and restoring it to a higher state of prosperity than it had ever attained before. He preserved both Christianity and civilization. For these exalted services he is called "the Great;" and no prince ever more heroically earned the title.

"It is hard," says Hughes, who has written an interesting but not exhaustive life of Alfred, "to account for the sudden and complete collapse of the West Saxon power in January, 878, since in the campaign of the preceding year Alfred had been successful both by sea and land." Yet such seems to have been the fact, whatever may be its explanation. No such panic had ever overcome the Britons, who made a more stubborn resistance. No prince ever suffered a severer humiliation than did the Saxon monarch during the dreary winter of

878; but, according to Asser, it was for his ultimate good. Alfred was deeply and sincerely religious, and like David saw the hand of God in all his misfortunes. In his case adversity proved the school of greatness. For six months he was hidden from public view, lost sight of entirely by his afflicted subjects, enduring great privations, and gaining a scanty subsistence. There are several popular legends about his life in the marshes, too well known to be described, — one about the cakes and another about his wanderings to the Danish camp disguised as a minstrel, both probable enough; yet, if true, they show an extraordinary depth of misfortunes.

At last his subjects began to rally. It was known by many that Alfred was alive. Bodies of armed followers gradually gathered at his retreat. He was strongly intrenched; and occasionally he issued from his retreat to attack straggling bands, or to make reconnoissance of the enemy's forces. In May, 878, he left his fortified position and met some brave and faithful subjects at Egbert's Stone, twenty miles to the east of Selwood. The gathering had been carefully planned and secretly made, and was unknown to the Danes. His first marked success was at Edington, or Ethandune, where the Pagan host lay encamped, near Westbury. We have no definite knowledge of the number of men engaged in that bloody and desperate battle, in which the Saxons

were greatly outnumbered by the Danes, who were marshalled under a chieftain called Guthrun. But the battle was decisive, and made Alfred once more master of England south of the Thames. Guthrun, now in Alfred's power, was the ablest warrior that the Northmen had as yet produced. He was shut up in an inland fort, with no ships on the nearest river, and with no hope of reinforcements. At the end of two weeks he humbly sued for peace, offering to quit Wessex for good, and even to embrace the Christian religion. Strange as it may seem, Alfred granted his request, — either, with profound statesmanship, not wishing to drive a desperate enemy to extremities, or seeking his conversion. The remains of the discomfited Pagan host crossed over into Mercia, and gave no further trouble. Never was a conquest attended with happier results. Guthrun (with thirty of his principal nobles) was baptized into the Christian faith, and received the Saxon name of Athelstan. But East Anglia became a Danish kingdom. The Danes were not expelled from England. Their settlement was permanent. The treaty of Wedmore confirmed them in their possessions. Alfred by this treaty was acknowledged as undisputed master of England south of the Thames; of Wessex and Essex, including London, Hertford, and St. Albans; of the whole of Mercia west of Watling Street, — the great road from London to Chester; but

the Danes retained also one half of England, which shows how formidable they were, even in defeat. The Danes and the Saxons, it would seem, commingled, and gradually became one nation.

The great Danish invasion of the ninth century was successful, since it gave half of England to the Pagans. It is a sad thing to contemplate. Civilization was doubtless retarded. Whole districts were depopulated, and monasteries and churches were ruthlessly destroyed, with their libraries and works of art. This could not have happened without a fearful demoralization among the Saxons themselves. They had become prosperous, and their wealth was succeeded by vices, especially luxury and sloth. Their wealth tempted the more needy of the adventurers from the North, who succeeded in their aggressions because they were stronger than the Saxons. So slow was the progress of England in civilization. As soon as it became centralized under a single monarch, it was subjected to fresh calamities. It would seem that the history of those ages is simply the history of violence and spoliations. There was the perpetual waste of human energies. Barbarism seemed to be stronger than civilization. Nor in this respect was the condition of England unique. The same public misfortunes happened in France, Germany, Italy, and Spain. For five hundred years Europe was the scene of constant strife. Not until the Normans

settled in England were the waves of barbaric invasion arrested.

The Danish conquest made a profound impression on Alfred, and stimulated him to renewed efforts to preserve what still remained of Christian civilization. His whole subsequent life was spent in actual war with the Northmen, or in preparations for war. It was remarkable that he succeeded as well as he did, for after all he was the sovereign of scarcely half the territory that Egbert had won, and over which his grandfather and father had ruled. He preserved Wessex; and in preserving Wessex he saved England, which would have been replunged in barbarism but for his perseverance, energy, and courage. That Danish invasion was a chastisement not undeserved, for both the clergy and the laity had become corrupt, had been enervated by prosperity. The clergy especially had become ignorant; not one in a thousand could write a common letter of salutation. They had suffered long and sorely from the rapacious Danes, in every manner; they saw the destruction of their richest and proudest abbeys, and their lands seized by Pagan barbarians, who settled down in them as lords of the soil, especially in Northumbria. But Alfred at least arrested their further progress, and threw them on the defensive. He knew that the recovery of the conquests which the Saxons had made was the work of exceeding difficulty. It was necessary to make

great preparations for future struggles, as peace with the Danes was only a truce. They aimed at the complete conquest of the island, and they sought to rouse the hostility of the Welsh.

Alfred showed a wise precaution against future assaults in constructing fortresses at the most important points within his control. Before his day the Saxons had but few fortified positions, and this want of forts had greatly facilitated the Danish conquest. But the Danes, as soon as they gained a strong position, fortified it, and were never afterwards ejected by force. Probably Alfred took the hint from them. He rebuilt and strengthened the fortresses along the coast, as he had four precious years of unmolested work; and for this his small kingdom was doubtless severely taxed. He imported skilled workmen, and adopted the newest improvements. He made use of stone instead of timber, and extended his works of construction to palaces, halls, and churches, as well as castles. So well built were his fortifications that no strong place was ever afterwards wrested from him. In those times the defence of kingdoms was in castles. They marked the feudal ages equally with monasteries and cathedral churches. Castles protected the realm from invasion and conquest, as much as they did the family of a feudal noble. The wisdom as well as the necessity of fortified cities was seen in a marked manner when the Northmen, in 885,

stole up the Thames and Medway and made an unexpected assault on Rochester. They were completely foiled, and were obliged to retreat to their ships, leaving behind them even the spoil they had brought from France. This successful resistance was a great moral assistance to Alfred, since it opened the eyes of bishops and nobles to the necessity of fortifying their towns, to which they had hitherto been opposed, being unwilling to incur the expense. So it was not long before Alfred had a complete chain of defences on the coast, as well as around his cities and palaces, able to resist sudden attacks,—which he had most to fear. His great work of fortification was that of London, which, though belonging to him by the peace of Wedmore, was neglected, fallen to decay, filled with lawless bands of marauders and pirates, and defenceless against attack. In 886 he marched against this city, which made no serious resistance; rebuilt it, made it habitable, fortified it, and encouraged people to settle in it, for he foresaw its vast commercial importance. Under the rule of his son Ethelred, it regained the pre-eminence it had enjoyed under the Romans as a commercial centre.

Having done what he could to protect his dominion from sudden attacks, Alfred then turned his attention to the reorganization of his army and navy. Strictly speaking he had no regular army, or standing force, which he could call his own. When the country

was threatened the freemen flew to arms, under their eorls and ealdormen; and on this force the king was obliged to rely. They sometimes acted without his orders, obeying the calls of their leaders when danger was most imminent. On the men in the immediate neighborhood of danger the brunt of the contest fell Nor could levies be relied upon for any length of time. they dwindled after a few weeks, in order to attend to their agricultural interests, for agriculture was the only great and permanent pursuit in the feudal ages. Everything was subordinate to labors in the field. The only wealth was in land, except what was hoarded by the clergy and nobles.

How well Alfred paid his soldiers it is difficult to determine. His own private means were large, and the Crown lands were very extensive. One-third of his income was spent upon his army. But it is not probable that a large force was under pay in time of peace; yet he had always one third of his forces ready to act promptly against an enemy The burden of the service was distributed over the whole kingdom. The main feature of his military reform seems to have been in the division of his forces into three bodies, only one of which was liable to be called upon for service at a time, except in great emergencies. In regard to tactics, or changes in armor and mode of fighting, we know nothing; for war as an art or science did not exist in any

Teutonic kingdom; it was lost with the fall of the Roman Empire. How far Alfred was gifted with military genius we are unable to say, beyond courage, fertility of resources, activity of movement, and a marvellous patience. His greatest qualities were moral, like those of Washington. It is his reproachless character, and his devotion to duty, and love of his people which impress us from first to last. As has been said of Marcus Aurelius, Alfred was a Saint Anselm on a throne. He had none of those turbulent and restless qualities which we associate with mediæval kings. What a contrast between him and William the Conqueror!

Alfred also gave his attention to the construction of a navy, as well as to the organization of an army, knowing that it was necessary to resist the Northmen on the ocean and prevent their landing on the coast. In 875 he had fought a naval battle with success, and had taken one of the ships of the sea-kings, which furnished him with a model to build his own ships, — doing the same thing that the Romans did in their early naval warfare with the Carthaginians. In 877 he destroyed a Danish fleet on its way to relieve Exeter But he soon made considerable improvement on the ships of his enemies, making them twice as long as those of the Danes, with a larger number of oars. These were steadier and swifter than the older vessels. As the West Saxons were not a seafaring people, he em-

ployed and munificently rewarded men from other nations more accustomed to the sea, — whether Frisians, Franks, Britons, Scots, or even Danes. The result was, he was never badly beaten at sea, and before the end of his reign he had swept the coast clear of pirates. Within two years from the treaty of Wedmore his fleet was ready for action. He was prepared to meet the sea-kings on equal terms, and in 882 he had gained an important naval battle over a fleet that was meditating an invasion.

In the year 885 the Danes again invaded England and laid siege to Rochester, but fled to their ships on the approach of Alfred. They were pursued by the Saxon king and defeated with great slaughter, sixteen Danish vessels being destroyed and their crews put to the sword. Nor had Guthrun Athelstan, the ex-viking, been true to his engagements. He had allowed two additional settlements of Danes on the East Anglian coasts, and had even assisted Alfred's enemies. Their defeat, however, induced him to live peaceably in East Anglia until he died in 890. These successes of Alfred secured peace with the Danes for eight more years, during which he pursued his various schemes for the improvement of his people, and in preparations for future wars. He had put his kingdom in a state of defence, and now turned his attention to legislation, — the supremest labor of an enlightened monarch.

The laws of Alfred wear a close resemblance to those which Moses gave to the Hebrews, and moreover are pervaded with Christian ideas. His aim seems to have been to recognize in his jurisprudence the supreme obedience which is due to the laws of God. In all the laws of the converted Teutonic nations, from Charlemagne down, we notice the influence of the Christian clergy in modifying the severity of the old Pagan codes. Alfred did not aim to be an original legislator, like Moses or Solon, but selected from the Mosaic code, and also from the laws of Ethelbert, Ina, Offa, and other Saxon princes, those regulations which he considered best adapted to the circumstances of the people whom he governed. He recognized more completely than any of his predecessors the rights of property, and attached great sanctity to oaths. Whoever violated his pledge was sentenced to imprisonment. He raised the dignity of ealdormen and bishops to that of the highest rank. He made treason against the royal authority the gravest offence known to the laws, and all were deemed traitors who should presume to draw the sword in the king's house. He made new provisions for personal security, and severely punished theft and robbery of every kind, especially of the property of the Church. He bestowed freedom on slaves after six years of service. Some think he instituted trial by jury. Like Theodosius and Charlemagne, he gave peculiar privi-

leges to the clergy as a counterpoise to the lawlessness of nobles.

One of the peculiarities of his legislation was compensation for crime, — seen alike in the Mosaic dispensation and in the old customs of the Germanic nations in their native forests. On conviction, the culprit was compelled to pay a sum of money to the relatives of the injured, and another sum to the community at large. This compensation varied according to the rank of the injured party, — and rank was determined by wealth. The owner of two hydes of land was ranked above a ceorl, or simple farmer, while the owner of twelve hydes was a royal thane. In the compensation for crime the gradation was curious: twelve shillings would pay for the loss of a foot, ten for a great toe, and twenty for a thumb. If a man robbed his equal, he was compelled to pay threefold; if he robbed the king, he paid ninefold; and if he robbed the church, he was obliged to return twelvefold: hence the robbery of ecclesiastical property was attended with such severe penalties that it was unusual. In some cases theft was punished with death.

The code of Alfred was severe, but in an age of crime and disorder severity was necessary. He also instituted a vigorous police, and divided the country into counties, and these again into hundreds or parishes, each of which was made responsible for the mainte-

nance of order and the detection of crime. He was severe on judges when they passed sentence irrespective of the rights of jurors. He did not emancipate slaves, but he ameliorated their condition and limited their term of compulsory service. Burglary in the king's house was punished by a fine of one hundred and twenty shillings; in an archbishop's, at ninety; in a bishop's or ealdorman's, at sixty; in the house of a man of twelve hydes, at thirty shillings; in a six-hyde man's, at fifteen; in a churl's, at five shillings, — the fine being graded according to the rank of him whose house had been entered. There was a rigorous punishment for working on Sunday: if a theow, by order of his lord, the lord had to pay a penalty of thirty shillings; if without the lord's order, he was condemned to be flogged. If a freeman worked without his lord's order, he had to pay sixty shillings or forfeit his freedom. If a man was found burning a tree in a forest, he was obliged to pay a fine of sixty shillings, in order to protect the forest; or if he cut down a tree under which thirty swine might stand, he was obliged to pay a fine of sixty shillings. These penalties seem severe, but they were inflicted for offences difficult to be detected and frequently committed. We infer from these various fines that burglary, robbery, petty larcenies, and brawls were the most common offences against the laws.

One of the greatest services which Alfred rendered to the cause of civilization in England was in separating judicial from executive functions. The old eorls and ealdormen were warriors; and yet to them had been committed the administration of justice, which they often abused, — frequently deciding cases against the verdicts of jurors, and sometimes unjustly dooming innocent men to capital punishment. Alfred hanged an ealdorman or alderman, one Freberne, for sentencing Haspin to death when the jury was in doubt. He even hanged twenty-four inferior officers, on whom judicial duties devolved, for palpable injustice.

The love of justice and truth was one of the main traits of Alfred's character, and he painfully perceived that the ealdormen of shires, though faithful and valiant warriors, were not learned and impartial enough to administer justice. There was scarcely one of them who could read the written law, or who had any extensive acquaintance with the common law or the usages which had been in force from time immemorial, — as far back as in the original villages of Germany. Moreover, the poor and defenceless had need of protection. They always had needed it, for in Pagan and barbarous countries their rights were too often disregarded. When brute force bore everything before it, it became both the duty and privilege of the king, who represented central power, to maintain the rights of the humblest

of his people, — to whom he was a father. To see justice enforced is the most exalted of the prerogatives of sovereigns; and no one appreciated this delegation of sovereign power from the Universal Father more than Alfred, the most conscientious and truth-loving of all the kings of the Middle Ages.

So, to maintain justice, Alfred set aside the ignorant and passionate ealdormen, and appointed judges whose sole duty it was to interpret and enforce the laws, and men best fitted to represent the king in the royal courts. They were sent through the shires to see that justice was done, and to report the decisions of the county courts. Thus came into existence the judges of assize, — an office or institution which remains to this day, amid all the revolutions of English thought and life, and all the changes which politics and dynasties have wrought.

Nor did Alfred rest with a reform of the law courts. He defined the boundaries of shires, which divisions are very old, and subdivided them into parishes, which have remained to this day. He gave to each hundred its court, from which appeals were made to a court representing several hundreds, — about three to each county. Each hundred was subdivided into tythings, or companies of ten neighboring householders, who were held as mutual sureties or frank (free) pledges for each other's orderly conduct; so that each man was a mem-

ber of a tything, and was obliged to keep household rolls of his servants. Thus every liegeman was known to the law, and was taught his duties and obligations; and every tything was responsible for the production of its criminals, and obliged to pay a fine if they escaped. Every householder was liable to answer for any stranger who might stop at his house. "This mutual liability or suretyship was the pivot of all Alfred's administrative reform, and wrought a remarkable change in the kingdom, so that merchants and travellers could go about without armed guards. The forests were emptied of outlaws, and confidence and security succeeded distrust and lawlessness. . . . The frank pledge-system, which was worked in country districts, was supplied in towns by the machinery of the guilds, — institutions combining the benefit of modern clubs, insurance societies, and trades-unions. As a rule, they were limited to members of one trade or calling."

Mr. Pearson, in his history of England, as quoted by Hughes, thus sums up this great administrative reform for the preservation of life and property and order during the Middle Ages: —

"What is essential to remember is, that life and property were not secured to the Anglo-Saxon by the State, but by the loyal union of his fellow-citizens; the Saxon guilds are unmatched in the history of their times as evidences of self-

reliance, mutual trust, patient self-restraint, and orderly love of law among a young people.

"To recapitulate the reforms of Alfred in the administration of justice and the resettlement of the country, the old divisions of shires were carefully readjusted, and divided into hundreds and tythings. The alderman of the shire still remained the chief officer, but the office was no longer hereditary. The king appointed the alderman, or eorl, who was president of the shire gemot, or council, and chief judge of the county court as well as governor of the shire, but was assisted and probably controlled in his judicial capacity by justices appointed by the king, and not attached to the shire, or in any way dependent on the alderman. The vice-domini, or nominees of the alderman, were abolished, and an officer substituted for them called the reeve of the shire, or sheriff, who carried out the decrees of the courts. The hundreds and tythings were represented by their own officers, and had their hundred-courts and courts-leet, which exercised a trifling criminal jurisdiction, but were chiefly assemblies answering to our grand juries and parish vestries. All householders were members of them, and every man thus became responsible for keeping the king's peace."

In regard to the financial resources of Alfred we know but little. Probably they were great, considering the extent and population of the little kingdom over which he ruled, but inconsiderable in comparison with the revenues of England at the present day. To build fortresses, construct a navy, and keep in pay a considerable military force, — to say nothing of his own private

expenditure and the expense of his court, his public improvements, the endowment of churches, the support of schools, the relief of the poor, and keeping the highways and bridges in repair, — required a large income. This was derived from the public revenues, crown lands, and private property. The public revenue was raised chiefly by customs, tolls, and fines. The crown lands were very extensive, as well as the private property of the sovereign, as he had large estates in every county of his kingdom.

But whatever his income, he set apart one quarter of it for religious purposes, one-sixth for architecture, and one-eighth for the poor, besides a considerable sum for foreigners, whom he liberally patronized. He richly endowed schools and monasteries. He was devoted to the Church, and his relations with the Pope were pleasant and intimate, although more independent than those of many of his successors.

All the biographers of Alfred speak of his zealous efforts in behalf of education. He established a school for the young nobles of his court, and taught them himself. His teachers were chiefly learned men drawn from the continent, especially from the Franks, and were well paid by the king. He made the scholarly Asser — a Welsh monk, afterwards bishop of Sherborne, from whose biography of Alfred our best information is derived — his counsellor and friend, and from his instruc-

tions acquired much knowledge. To Asser he gave the general superintendence of education, not merely for laymen, but for priests. In his own words, he declared that his wish was that all free-born youth should persevere in learning until they could read the English Scriptures. For those who desired to devote themselves to the Church, he provided the means for the study of Latin. He gave all his children a good education. His own thirst for knowledge was remarkable, considering his cares and public duties. He copied a prayer-book with his own hands, and always carried it in his bosom. Asser read to him all the books which were then accessible. From an humble scholar the king soon became an author. He translated "Consolations of Philosophy" from the Latin of Bœthius, a Roman senator of the sixth century, — the most remarkable literary effort of the declining days of the Roman Empire, and highly prized in the Middle Ages. He also translated the "Chronicle of the World," by Orosius, a Spanish priest, who lived in the early part of the fifth century, — a work suggested by Saint Augustine's "City of God." The "Ecclesiastical History" of Bede was also translated by Alfred. He is said to have translated the Proverbs of Solomon and the Fables of Æsop. His greatest literary work, however, was the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, the principal authority of the reign of Alfred. No man of his day wrote the Saxon language so purely as did Alfred himself; and he was

distinguished not only for his knowledge of Latin, but for profound philosophical reflections interspersed through his writings, which would do honor to a Father of the Church. He was also a poet, inferior only to Cædmon. Nor was his knowledge confined to literature alone; it was extended to the arts, especially architecture, ship-building, and silver-workmanship. He built more beautiful edifices than any of his predecessors. He also had a knowledge of geography beyond his contemporaries, and sent a Norwegian ship-master to explore the White Sea. He enriched his translation of Orosius by a sketch of the new geographical discoveries in the North. In fact, there was scarcely any branch of knowledge then known in which Alfred was not well instructed,—being a remarkably learned man for his age, and as enlightened as he was learned.

But in the midst of his reforms and wise efforts to civilize his people, the war-clouds gathered once more, and he was obliged to put forth all his energies to defend his realm from the incursions of his old enemies. The death of Charles the Bald in the year 877 left France in a very disordered state, and the Northmen under Hasting, one of the greatest of their vikings, recommenced their ravages. In 893 they crossed the Channel in two hundred and fifty vessels, and invaded England, followed soon after by Hasting with another large detachment, and strongly intrenched themselves near

Winchester. Alfred at the same time strongly fortified his own position, about thirty miles distant, and kept so close a watch over the movements of his enemies that they rarely ventured beyond their own intrenchments. A sort of desultory warfare succeeded, and continued for a year without any decisive results. At last the Danes, getting weary, broke up their camps, and resolved to pass into East Anglia. They were met by Alfred at Farnham and forced to fight, which resulted in their defeat and the loss of all the spoils they had taken and all the horses they had brought from France. The discomfited Danes retreated, by means of their ships, to an island in the Thames, at its junction with the Colne, where they were invested by Alfred. They would soon have been at the mercy of the Saxon king, had it not unfortunately happened that the Danes on the east coast, from Essex to Northumbria, joined the invaders, which unlooked-for event compelled Alfred to raise the blockade, and send Ethelred his son to the west, where the Danes were again strongly intrenched at Banfleet, near London. Their camp was successfully stormed, and much booty was taken, together with the wife and sons of Hasting. The Danish fleet was also captured, and some of the vessels were sent to London. But Hasting still held out, in spite of his disaster, and succeeded in intrenching himself with the remnants of his army at Shoebury, ten miles from Banfleet, from

which he issued on a marauding expedition along the northern banks of the Thames, carrying fire and sword wherever he went, thence turned northward, making no halt until he reached the banks of the Severn, where he again intrenched himself, but was again beaten. Hasting saved himself by falling back on a part of East Anglia removed from Alfred's influence, and appeared near Chester. Alfred himself had undertaken the task of guarding Exeter and the coasts of Devonshire and South Wales, where he wintered, leaving Ethelred to pursue Hasting.

Thus a year passed in the successful defence of the kingdom, the Danes having gained no important advantage. At the end of the second campaign Hasting still maintained his ground and fortified himself on the Thames, within twenty miles of London. At the close of the third year, Hasting, being driven from his position on the Thames, established himself in Shropshire. "In the spring of 897 Hasting broke up his last camp on the English soil, being foiled at every point, and crossed the sea with the remnant of his followers to the banks of the Seine." The war was now virtually at an end, and the Danes utterly defeated.

The work for which Alfred was raised up was at last accomplished. He had stayed the inundations of the Northmen, defended his kingdom of Wessex, and planted the seeds of a higher civilization in England

winning the love and admiration of his subjects. The greatness of Alfred should not be measured by the size of his kingdom. It is not the bigness of a country that gives fame to its illustrious men. The immortal heroes of Palestine and Greece ruled over territories smaller and of less importance than the kingdom of Wessex. It is the greatness of their characters that preserves their name and memory.

Alfred died in the year 901, at the age of fifty-two, worn out with disease and labors, leaving his kingdom in a prosperous state; and it had rest under his son Edward for nine years. Then the contest was renewed with the Danes, and it was under the reign of Edward that Mercia was once more annexed to Wessex, as well as Northumbria. Edward died in 925, and under the reign of his son Æthelstan the Saxon kingdom reached still greater prosperity. The completion of the West Saxon realm was reserved for Edmund, son of Æthelstan, who ascended the throne in 940, being a mere boy. He was ruled by the greatest statesman of that age, the celebrated Dunstan, Abbot of Glastonbury and Archbishop of Canterbury,—a great statesman and a great Churchman, like Hincmar of Rheims.

Thus the heroism and patience of Alfred were rewarded by the restoration of the Saxon power, and the absorption of what Mr. Green calls "Danelagh," after a

long and bitter contest, of which Alfred was the greatest hero. In surveying his conquests we are reminded of the long contest which Charlemagne had with the Saxons. Next to Charlemagne, Alfred was the greatest prince who reigned in Europe after the dissolution of the Roman Empire, until the Norman Conquest. He fought not for the desire of bequeathing a great empire to his descendants, but to rescue his country from ruin, in the midst of overwhelming calamities. It was a struggle for national existence, not military glory. In the successful defence of his kingdom against the ravages of Pagan invaders he may be likened to William the Silent in preserving the nationality of Holland. No European monarch from the time of Alfred can be compared to him in the service he rendered to his country. The memorableness of a war is to be gauged not by the number of the combatants, but by the sacredness of a cause. It was the devotion of Washington to a great cause which embalms his memory in the heart of the world. And no English king has left so hallowed a name as Alfred: it was because he was a benefactor, and infused his energy of purpose into a discouraged and afflicted people. How far his saint-like virtues were imitated it is difficult to tell. Religion was the groundwork of his character, — faith in God and devotion to duty. His piety was also more enlightened than the piety of his age, since it was

practical and not formal. His temper was open, frank, and genial. He loved books and strangers and travellers. There was nothing cynical about him, in spite of his perplexities and discouragements. He had a beautifully balanced character and a many-sided nature. He had the power of inspiring confidence in defeat and danger. His judgment and good sense seemed to fit him for any emergency. He had the same control over himself that he had over others. His patriotism and singleness of purpose inspired devotion. He felt his burdens, but did not seek to throw them off. "Hardship and sorrow," said he, "not a king but would wish to be without these if he could; but I know he cannot." "So long as I have lived I have striven to live worthily." "I desire to leave to the men that come after me a remembrance of me in good works." These were some of his precious utterances, so that the love which he won a thousand years ago has lingered around his name from that day to this.

It was a strong sense of duty, quickened by a Christian life, which gave to the character of Alfred its peculiar radiance. He felt his responsibilities as a Christian ruler. He was affable, courteous, accessible. His body was frail and delicate, but his energies were never relaxed. Pride and haughtiness were unknown in his intercourse with bishops or nobles. He had no striking defects. He was the model of a man and a king; and

he left the impress of his genius on all the subsequent institutions of his country. "The tree," says Dr. Pauli, one of his ablest biographers, "which now casts its shadow far and near over the world, when menaced with destruction in its bud, was carefully guarded by Alfred; but at the period when it was ready to burst forth into a plant, he was forced to leave it to the influence of time. Many great men have occupied themselves with the care of this tree, and each in his own way has advanced its growth. William the Conqueror, with his iron hand, bent the tender branches to his will; Henry the Second ruled the Saxons with true Roman pride, but in *Magna Charta* the old German nature became aroused and worked powerfully, even among the barons. It became free under Edward the Third,— that prince so ambitious of conquest: the old language and the old law, the one somewhat altered, the other much softened, opened the path to a new era. The nation stood like an oak in the full strength of its leafy maturity; and to this strength the Reformation is indebted for its accomplishment. Elizabeth, the greatest woman who ever sat upon a throne, occupied a central position in a golden age of power and literature. Then came the Stuarts, who with their despotic ideas outraged the deeply-rooted Saxon individuality of the English, and by their fall contributed to the sure development of that freedom which was founded so long

before. The stern Cromwell and the astute William the Third aided in preparing for the now advanced nation that path in which it has ever since moved. The Anglo-Saxon race has already attained maturity in the New World, and, founded on these pillars, it will triumph in all places and in every age. Alfred's name will always be placed among those of the great spirits of this earth; and so long as men regard their past history with reverence they will not venture to bring forward any other in comparison with him who saved the West Saxon nation from complete destruction, and in whose heart all the virtues dwelt in such harmonious concord."

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QUEEN ELIZABETH.

A. D. 1533–1603.

WOMAN AS A SOVEREIGN.

QUEEN ELIZABETH.

WOMAN AS A SOVEREIGN.

I DO not present Queen Elizabeth either as a very interesting or as a faultless woman. As a woman she is not a popular favorite. But it is my object to present her as a queen; to show with what dignity and ability a woman may fill one of the most difficult and responsible stations of the world. It is certain that we associate with her a very prosperous and successful reign; and if she was lacking in those feminine qualities which make woman interesting to man, we are constrained to admire her for those talents and virtues which shed lustre around a throne. She is unquestionably one of the links in the history of England and of modern civilization; and her reign is so remarkable, considering the difficulties with which she had to contend, that she may justly be regarded as one of the benefactors of her age and country. It is a pleasant task to point out the greatness, rather than the defects, of so illustrious a woman.

It is my main object to describe her services to her country, for it is by services that all monarchs are to be judged; and all sovereigns, especially those armed with great power, are exposed to unusual temptations, which must ever qualify our judgments. Even bad men — like Cæsar, Richelieu, and Napoleon — have obtained favorable verdicts in view of their services. And when sovereigns whose characters have been sullied by weaknesses and defects, yet who have escaped great crimes and scandals and devoted themselves to the good of their country, have proved themselves to be wise, enlightened, and patriotic, great praise has been awarded to them. Thus, Henry IV. of France, and William III. of England have been admired in spite of their defects.

Queen Elizabeth is the first among the great female sovereigns of the world with whose reign we associate a decided progress in national wealth, power, and prosperity; so that she ranks with the great men who have administered kingdoms. If I can prove this fact, the sex should be proud of so illustrious a woman, and should be charitable to those foibles which sullied the beauty of her character, since they were in part faults of the age, and developed by the circumstances which surrounded her.

She was born in the year 1533, the rough age of Luther, when Charles V. was dreaming of establishing

a united continental military empire, and when the princes of the House of Valois were battling with the ideas of the Reformation, — an earnest, revolutionary, and progressive age. She was educated as the second daughter of Henry VIII. naturally would be, having the celebrated Ascham as her tutor in Greek, Latin, French, and Italian. She was precocious as well as studious, and astonished her teachers by her attainments. She was probably the best-educated woman in England next to Lady Jane Grey, and she excelled in those departments of knowledge for which novels have given such distaste in these more enlightened times.

Elizabeth was a mere girl when her mother, Anne Boleyn, was executed for infidelities and levities to which her husband could not be blind, had he been less suspicious, — a cruel execution, which nothing short of high-treason could have justified even in that rough age. Though her birth was declared to be illegitimate by her cruel and unscrupulous father, yet she was treated as a princess. She was seventeen when her hateful old father died; and during the six years when the government was in the hands of Somerset, Edward VI. being a minor, Elizabeth was exposed to no peculiar perils except those of the heart. It is said that Sir Thomas Seymour, brother to the Protector, made a strong impression on her, and that she

would have married him had the Council consented. By nature, Elizabeth was affectionate, though prudent. Her love for Seymour was uncalculating and unselfish, though he was unworthy of it. Indeed, it was her misfortune always to misplace her affections, — which is so often the case in the marriages of superior women, as if they loved the image merely which their own minds created, as Dante did when he bowed down to Beatrice. When we see intellectual men choosing weak and silly women for wives, and women of exalted character selecting unworthy and wicked husbands, it does seem as if Providence determines all matrimonial unions independently of our own wills and settled purposes. How often is wealth wedded to poverty, beauty to ugliness, and amiability to ill-temper! The hard, cold, unsocial, unsympathetic, wooden, scheming, selfish man is the only one who seems to attain his end, since he can bide his time, — wait for somebody to fancy him.

Elizabeth had that mixed character which made her life a perpetual conflict between her inclinations and her interests. Her generous impulses and affectionate nature made her peculiarly susceptible, while her prudence and her pride kept her from a foolish marriage. She may have loved unwisely, but she had sufficient self-control to prevent a mésalliance. While she may have resigned herself at times to the fascinations of

accomplished men, she yet fathomed the abyss into which imprudence would bury her forever.

On the accession of Mary, her elder sister, daughter of Catharine of Aragon, Elizabeth's position was exceedingly critical, exposed as she was to the intrigues of the Catholics and the jealousy of the Queen. And when we remember that the great question and issue of that age was whether the Catholic or Protestant religion should have the ascendency, and that this ascendency seemed to hinge upon the private inclinations of the sovereign who in the furtherance of this great end would scruple at nothing to accomplish it, and that the greatest crimes committed for its sake would be justified by all the sophistries that religious partisanship could furnish, and be upheld by all bigots and statesmen as well as priests, it is really remarkable that Elizabeth was spared. For Mary was not only urged on to the severest measures by Gardiner and Bonner (the bishops of Winchester and London), and by all the influences of Rome, to which she was devoted body and soul, — yea, by all her confidential advisers in the State, to save themselves from future contingencies, — but she was also jealous of her sister, as Elizabeth was afterwards jealous of Mary Stuart. And it would have been as easy for Mary to execute Elizabeth as it was for Elizabeth to execute the Queen of Scots, or Henry VIII. to behead his wives:

and such a crime would have been excused as readily as the execution of Somerset or of the Lady Jane Grey, both from political necessity and religious expediency. Elizabeth was indeed subjected to great humiliations, and even compelled to sue for her life. What more piteous than her letter to Mary, begging only for an interview: "Wherefore I humbly beseech your Majesty to let me answer before yourself; and, once again kneeling with humbleness of heart, I earnestly crave to speak to your Highness, which I would not be so bold as to desire if I knew not myself most clear, as I know myself most true." Here is a woman pleading for her life to a sister to whom she had done no wrong, and whose only crime was in being that sister's heir. What an illustration of the jealousy of royalty and the bitterness of religious feuds; and what a contrast in this servile speech to that arrogance which Elizabeth afterward assumed towards her Parliament and greatest lords! Ah, to what cringing meanness are most people reduced by adversity! In what pride are we apt to indulge in the hour of triumph! How circumstances change the whole appearance of our lives!

Elizabeth, however, in order to save her life, was obliged to dissemble. If her true Protestant opinions had been avowed, I doubt if she could have escaped. We do not see in this dissimulation anything very

lofty; yet she acted with singular tact and discretion. It is creditable, however, to Mary that she did not execute her sister. She showed herself more noble than Elizabeth did later in her treatment of the Queen of Scots. History calls her the "Bloody Mary;" and it must be admitted that she was the victim and slave of religious bigotry, and that she sanctioned many bloody executions. And yet it would appear that her nature was, after all, affectionate, which is evinced in the fact that she did spare the life of Elizabeth. Here her better impulses gained the victory over craft and policy and religious intolerance, and rescued her name from the infamy to which such a crime would have doomed her, which her advisers would have sanctioned, and would have rejoiced in as much as in the slaughter of Saint Bartholomew.

The crocodile tears which Elizabeth is said to have shed when the death of her sister Mary was announced to her at Hatfield were soon wiped away in the pomps and enthusiasms which hailed her accession to the throne. This was in 1558, when she was twenty-five, in the fulness of her attractions and powers. Great expectations were formed of her wisdom and genius. She had passed through severe experiences; she had led a life of study and reflection; she was gifted with talents and graces. "Her accomplishments, her misfortunes, and her brilliant youth exalted into passionate homage

the principle of loyalty, and led to extravagant panegyrics." She was good-looking, if she was not beautiful, since the expression of her countenance showed benignity, culture, and vivacity. She had piercing dark eyes, a clear complexion, and animated features. She was in perfect health, capable of great fatigue, apt in business, sagacious, industrious, witty, learned, and fond of being surrounded with illustrious men. She was high-church in her sympathies, yet a Protestant in the breadth of her views and in the fulness of her reforms. Above all, she was patriotic and disinterested in her efforts to develop the resources of her kingdom and to preserve it from entangling wars.

The kingdom was far from being prosperous when Elizabeth assumed the reins of government, and it is the enormous stride in civilization which England made during her reign, beset with so many perils, which constitutes her chief claim to the admiration of mankind. Let it be borne in mind that she began her rule in perplexities, anxieties, and embarrassments. The crown was encumbered with debts; the nobles were ambitious and factious; the people were poor, dispirited, unimportant, and distracted by the claims of two hostile religions. Only one bishop in the whole realm was found willing to crown her. Scotland was convulsed with factions, and was a standing menace, growing out of the marriage of Mary Stuart with a

French prince. Barbarous Ireland was in a state of chronic rebellion; France, Spain, and Rome were decidedly hostile; and all Catholic Europe aimed at the overthrow of England. Philip II. had adopted the dying injunction of his father to extinguish the Protestant religion, and the princes of the House of Valois were leagued with Rome for the attainment of this end. At home, Elizabeth had to contend with a jealous Parliament, a factious nobility, an empty purse, and a divided people. The people generally were rude and uneducated; the language was undeveloped; education was chiefly confined to nobles and priests; the poor were oppressed by feudal laws. No great work in English history, poetry, or philosophy had yet appeared. The comforts and luxuries of life were scarcely enjoyed even by the rich. Chimneys were just beginning to be used. The people slept on mats of straw; they ate without forks on pewter or wooden platters; they drank neither tea nor coffee, but drank what their ancestors did in the forests of Germany, — beer; their houses, thatched with straw, were dark, dingy, and uncomfortable. Commerce was small; manufactures were in their infancy; the coin was debased, and money was scarce; trade was in the hands of monopolists; coaches were almost unknown; the roads were impassable except for horsemen, and were infested with robbers; only the rich could afford wheaten bread;

agricultural implements were of the most primitive kind; animal food, for the greater part of the year, was eaten only in a salted state; enterprise of all kinds was restricted within narrow limits; beggars and vagrants were so numerous that the most stringent laws were necessary to protect the people against them; profane swearing was nearly universal; the methods of executing capital punishments were revolting; the rudest sports amused the people; the parochial clergy were of no helpful grade; country squires sought nothing higher than fox-hunting; it took several days for letters to reach the distant counties; the population numbered only four millions; there was nothing grand and imposing in art but the palaces of nobles and the Gothic monuments of mediæval Europe.

Such was "Merrie England" on the accession of Elizabeth to the throne, — a rude nation of feudal nobles, rural squires, and ignorant people, who toiled for a mere pittance on the lands of cold, unsympathetic masters; without books, without schools, without privileges, without rights, except to breathe the common air and indulge in coarse pleasures and religious holidays and village fêtes.

On the other hand, it must be admitted that the people were loyal, religious, and brave; that they had the fear of God before their eyes, and felt personal

responsibility to Him, so that crimes were uncommon except among the lowest and most abandoned; that family ties were strong; that simple hospitalities were everywhere exercised; that healthy pleasures stimulated no inordinate desires; that the people, if poor, had enough to eat and drink; that service was not held to be degrading; that churches were not deserted; that books, what few there were, did not enervate or demoralize; that science did not attempt to ignore the moral government of God; that laws were a terror to evil-doers; that philanthropists did not seek to reform the world by mechanical inventions, or elevate society by upholding the majesty of man rather than the majesty of God, — teaching the infallibility of congregated masses of ignorance, inexperience, and conceit. Even in those rude times there were the certitudes of religious faith, of domestic endearments, of patriotic devotion, of respect for parents, of loyalty to rulers, of kindness to the poor and miserable; there were the latent fires of freedom, the impulses of generous enthusiasm, and resignation to the ills which could not be removed. So that in England, in Elizabeth's time, there was a noble material for Christianity and art and literature to work upon, and to develop a civilization such as had not existed previously on this earth, — a civilization destined to spread throughout the world in new institutions, inventions, laws, language, and litera-

ture, binding hostile races together, and proclaiming the sovereignty of intelligence, — the *νοῦς κρατεῖ* of the old Ionian philosophers, — with that higher sovereignty which Moses based upon the Ten Commandments, and that higher law still which Jesus taught upon the Mount.

Yet with all this fine but rude material for future greatness, it was nevertheless a glaring fact that the condition of England on the accession of Elizabeth was most discouraging, — a poor and scattered agricultural nation, without a navy of any size, without a regular army, with factions in every quarter, with struggling and contending religious parties, with a jealous parliament of unenlightened country squires; yet a nation seriously threatened by the most powerful monarchies of the Continent, who detested the doctrines which were then taking root in the land. Against the cabals of Rome, the navies of Spain, and the armies of France, — alike hostile and dangerous, — England could make but a feeble show of physical forces, and was protected only by her insular position. The public dangers were so imminent that there was needed not only a strong hand but a stout heart and a wise head at the helm. Excessive caution was necessary, perpetual vigilance was imperative; a single imprudent measure might be fatal in such exigencies. And this accounts for the vacillating policy of Elizabeth, so often condemned

by historians. It did not proceed from weakness of head, but from real necessity occasioned by constant embarrassments and changing circumstances. According to all the canons of expediency, it was the sign of a sagacious ruler to temporize and promise and deceive in that sad perplexity. Governments, thus far in the history of nations, have been carried on upon different principles from those that bind the conduct of individuals, especially when the weak contend against the strong. This, abstractly, is not to be defended. Governments and individuals alike are bound by the same laws of immutable morality in their general relations; but the rules of war are different from the rules of peace. Governments are expediencies to suit peculiar crises and exigencies. A man assaulted by robbers would be a fool to fall back on the passive virtues of non-resistance.

Elizabeth had to deal both with religious bigots and unscrupulous kings. We may be disgusted with the course she felt it politic to pursue, but it proved successful. A more generous and open course might have precipitated an attack when she was unprepared and defenceless. Her dalliances and expediencies and dissimulations delayed the evil day, until she was ready for the death-struggle; and when the tempest of angry human forces finally broke upon her defenceless head, she was saved only by a storm

of wind and rain which Providence kindly and opportunely sent. Had the "Invincible Armada" been permitted to invade England at the beginning of her reign, there would probably have been another Spanish conquest. What chance would the untrained militia of a scattered population, without fortresses or walled cities or military leaders of skill, have had against the veteran soldiers who were marshalled under Philip II., with all the experiences learned in the wars of Charles V. and in the conquest of Peru and Mexico, aided, too, by the forces of France and the terrors of the Vatican and the money of the Flemish manufacturers? It was the dictate of self-preservation which induced Elizabeth to prevaricate, and to deceive the powerful monarchs who were in league against her. If ever lying and cheating were justifiable, they were then; if political craft can ever be defensible, it was in the sixteenth century. So that I cannot be hard on the embarrassed Queen for a policy which on the strict principles of morality it would be difficult to defend. It was a dark age of conspiracies, rebellions, and cabals. In dealing with the complicated relations of government in that day, there were no recognized principles but those of expediency. Even in our own times, expediency rather than right too often seems to guide nations. It is not just and fair, therefore, to expect from a sovereign, in Queen Elizabeth's time, that openness and fairness

which are the result only of a higher national civilization. What would be blots on government to-day were not deemed blots in the sixteenth century. Elizabeth must be judged by the standard of her age, not of ours, in her official and public acts.

We must remember, also, that this great Queen was indorsed, supported, and even instructed by the ablest and wisest and most patriotic statesmen that were known to her generation. Lord Burleigh, her prime minister, was a marvel of political insight, industry, and fidelity. If he had not the commanding genius of Thomas Cromwell or the ambitious foresight of Richelieu, he surpassed the statesmen of his day in patriotic zeal and in disinterested labors, — not to extend the boundaries of the empire, but to develop national resources and make the country strong for defence. He was a plodding, wary, cautious, far-seeing, long-headed old statesman, whose opinions it was not safe for Elizabeth to oppose; and although she was arbitrary and opinionated herself, she generally followed Burleigh's counsels, — unwillingly at times, but firmly when she perceived the necessity; for she was, with all her pertinacity, open to conviction of reason. I cannot deny that she sometimes headed off her prime-minister and deceived him, and otherwise complicated the difficulties that beset her reign; but this was only when she felt a strong

personal repugnance to the state measures which he found it imperative to pursue. After all, Elizabeth was a woman, and the woman was not utterly lost in the Queen. It is greatly to her credit, however, that she retained the services of this old statesman for forty years, and that she filled the great offices in the State and Church with men of experience, genius, and wisdom. She made Parker the Archbishop of Canterbury, — a man of remarkable moderation and breadth of mind, whose reforms were carried on without exciting hostilities, and have survived the fanaticisms and hostile attacks of generations. Walsingham, her ambassador at Paris, and afterwards her secretary of state, ferreted out the plots of the Jesuits and the intrigues of hostile courts, and rendered priceless service by his acuteness and diligence. Lord Effingham, one of the Howards, defeated the "Invincible Armada." Sir Thomas Gresham managed her finances so ably that she was never without money. Coke was her attorney. Sir Nicholas Bacon — the ablest lawyer in the realm, and a stanch Protestant — was her lord-keeper; while his illustrious son, the immortal Francis Bacon, though not adequately rewarded, was always consulted by the Queen in great legal difficulties. I say nothing of those elegant and gallant men who were the ornaments of her court, and in some instances the generals of her armies and admirals of her navies, — Sackville, Raleigh,

Sidney, not to mention Essex and Leicester, all of whom were distinguished for talents and services; men who had no equals in their respective provinces; so gifted that it is difficult to determine whether the greatness of her reign was more owing to the talents of the ministers or to the wisdom of the Queen herself. Unless she had been a great woman, I doubt whether she would have discerned the merits of these men, and employed them in her service and kept them so long in office.

It was by these great men that Elizabeth was ruled, — so far as she was ruled at all, — not by favorites, like her successors, James and Charles. The favorites at the court of Elizabeth were rarely trusted with great powers unless they were men of signal abilities, and regarded as such by the nation itself. While she lavished favors upon them, — sometimes to the disgust of the old nobility, — she was never ruled by them, as James was by Buckingham, and Louis XV. by Madame de Pompadour. Elizabeth was not above coquetry, it is true; but after toying with Leicester and Raleigh, — never, though, to the serious injury of her reputation as a woman, — she would retire to the cabinet of her ministers and yield to the sage suggestions of Burleigh and Walsingham. At her council-board she was an entirely different woman from what she was among her courtiers: *there* she would tolerate no flattery, and was controlled only

by reason and good sense, — as practical as Burleigh himself, and as hard-working and business-like; cold, intellectual, and clear-headed, utterly without enthusiasm.

Perhaps the greatest service which Elizabeth rendered to the English nation and the cause of civilization was her success in establishing Protestantism as the religion of the land, against so many threatening obstacles. In this she was aided and directed by some of the most enlightened divines that England ever had. The liturgy of Cranmer was re-established, preferments were conferred on married priests, the learned and pious were raised to honor, eminent scholars and theologians were invited to England, the Bible was revised and freely circulated, and an alliance was formed between learning and religion by the great men who adorned the universities. Though inclined to ritualism, Elizabeth was broad and even moderate in reform, desiring, according to the testimony of Bacon, that all extremes of idolatry and superstition should be avoided on the one hand, and levity and contempt on the other; that all Church matters should be examined without sophistical niceties or subtle speculations

The basis of the English Church as thus established by Elizabeth was half-way between Rome and Geneva, — a compromise, I admit; but all established institutions and governments accepted by the people are based

on compromise. How can there be even family government without some compromise, inasmuch as husband and wife cannot always be expected to think exactly alike?

At any rate, the Church established by Elizabeth was signally adapted to the wants and genius of the English people, — evangelical, on the whole, in its creed, though not Calvinistic; unobtrusive in its forms, easy in its discipline, and aristocratic in its government; subservient to bishops, but really governed by the enlightened few who really govern all churches, Independent, Presbyterian, or Methodist; supported by the State, yet wielding only spiritual authority; giving its influence to uphold the crown and the established institutions of the country; conservative, yet earnestly Protestant. In the sixteenth century it was the Church of reform, of progress, of advancing and liberalizing thought. Elizabeth herself was a zealous Protestant, protecting the cause whenever it was persecuted, encouraging Huguenots, and not disdaining the Presbyterians of Scotland. She was not as generous to the Protestants of Holland and France as we could have wished, for she was obliged to husband her resources, and hence she often seemed parsimonious; but she was the acknowledged head of the reform movement in Europe. Her hostility to Rome and Roman influence was inexorable. She may not have carried reforms as far

as the Puritans desired, and who can wonder at that? Their spirit was aggressive, revolutionary, bitter, and, pushed to its logical sequences, was hostility to the throne itself, as proved by their whole subsequent history until Cromwell was dead. And this hostility Burleigh perceived as well as the Queen, which doubtless led to severities, persecutions and executions that our age cannot pretend to justify.

The Queen did dislike and persecute the Puritans, not, I think, so much because they made war on the surplice, liturgy, and divine right of bishops, as because they were at heart opposed to all absolute authority both in State and Church, and when goaded by persecution would hurl even kings from their thrones. It is to be regretted that Elizabeth was so severe on those who differed from her; she had no right to insist on uniformity with her conscience in those matters which are above any human authority. The Reformation in its severest logical consequences, in its grandest deductions, affirms the right of private judgment as the mighty pillar of its support. All parties, Presbyterian as well as Episcopalian, sought uniformity; they only differed as to its standard. With the Queen and ministers and prelates it was the laws of the land; with the Puritans, the decrees of provincial and national synods. Hence, if Elizabeth insisted that her subjects should conform to her notions and

the ordinances of Parliament and convocations, she showed a spirit which was universal. She was superior even in toleration to all contemporaneous sovereigns, Catholic or Protestant, man or woman. Contrast her persecutions of Catholics and Puritans with the persecution by Catherine de Médicis and Charles IX. and Philip II. and Ferdinand II.; or even with that under the Regent Murray of Scotland, when churches and abbeys were ruthlessly destroyed. Contrast her Archbishop of Canterbury with the religious dictator of Scotland. She kindled no *auto-da-fé*, like the Spaniards; she incited no wholesale massacre, like the demented fury of France; she had a loving care of her subjects that no religious bigotry could suppress. She did not seek to exterminate Catholics or Puritans, but simply to build up the Church of England as the shield and defence and enlargement of Protestantism in times of unmitigated religious ferocity, — a Protestantism that has proved the bulwark of European liberties, as it was the foundation of all progress in England. In giving an impulse to this great emancipating movement, even if she did not push it to its remote logical end, Elizabeth was a benefactor of her country and of mankind, and is not unjustly called a nursing-mother of the Church, — being so regarded by Protestants, not in England merely, but on the Continent of Europe. When was ever a religious revolution effected, or a

national church established, with so little bloodshed? When have ever such great changes proved so popular and so beneficial, and, I may add, so permanent? After all the revolutions in English thought and life for three hundred years, the Church as established by Elizabeth is still dear to the great body of English people, and has survived every agitation. And even many things which the Puritans sought to sweep away — the music of the choir, organs, and chants, even the holidays of venerated ages — are now revived by the descendants of the Puritans with ancient ardor; showing how permanent are such festivals as Christmas and Easter in the heart of Christendom, and how hopeless it is to eradicate what the Church and Christianity, from their earliest ages, have sanctioned and commended.

The next great service which Elizabeth rendered to England was a development of its resources, — ever a primal effort with wise statesmen, with such administrators as Sully, Colbert, Richelieu. The policy of her Government was not the policy of aggrandizement in war, which has ever provoked jealousies and hatreds in other nations, and led to dangerous combinations, and sowed the seed of future wars. The policy of Napoleon was retaliated in the conquests of Prussia in our day; and the policy of Prussia may yet lead to its future dismemberment, in spite of the imperial realm

shaped by Bismarck. "With what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again," — an eternal law, binding both individuals and nations, from which there is no escape. The government of Elizabeth did not desire or aim at foreign conquests, — the great error of European statesmen on the Continent; it sought the establishment of the monarchy at home, and the development of the various industries of the nation, since in these industries are both power and wealth. Commerce was encouraged, and she girt her island around with those "wooden walls" which have proved England's impregnable defence against every subsequent combination of tyrants and conquerors. The East India Company was formed, and the fisheries of Newfoundland established. It was under Elizabeth's auspices that Frobisher penetrated to the Polar Sea, that Sir Francis Drake circumnavigated the globe, that Sir Walter Raleigh colonized Virginia, and that Sir Humphrey Gilbert attempted to discover a northwestern passage to India. Manufactories were set up for serges, so that wool was no longer exported, but the raw material was consumed at home. A colony of Flemish weavers was planted in the heart of England. The prosperity of dyers and cloth-dressers and weavers dates from this reign, although some attempts at manufactures were made in the reign of Edward III. A refuge was given to persecuted foreigners, and work

was found for them to do. Pasture-land was converted to tillage, — not, as is now the case, to parks for the wealthy classes. Labor was made respectable, and enterprise of all kinds was stimulated. Wealth was sought in industry and economy, rather than in mines of gold and silver; so that wealth was doubled during this reign, and the population increased from four millions to six millions. All the old debts of the Crown were paid, both principal and interest, and the debased coin was called in at a great sacrifice to the royal revenue. The arbitrary management of commerce by foreign merchants was broken up, and weights and measures were duly regulated. The Queen did not revoke monopolies, it is true; the principles of political economy were not then sufficiently understood. But even monopolies, which disgraced the old Roman world, and are a disgrace to any age, were not so gigantic and demoralizing in those times as in our own, under our free institutions; they were not used to corrupt legislation and bribe judges and prevent justice, but simply to enrich politicians and favorites, and as a reward for distinguished services.

Justice in the courts was impartially administered; there was security to property and punishment for crime. No great culprits escaped conviction; nor, when convicted, were they allowed to purchase, with their stolen wealth, the immunities of freedom. The

laws were not a mockery, as in republican Rome, where demagogues had the ascendency, and prepared the way for usurpation and tyranny. All the expenses of the government were managed economically, — so much so that the Queen herself received from Parliament, for forty years, only an average grant of £65,000 a year. She disliked to ask money from the Commons, and they granted subsidies with extreme reluctance; the result was that between the two the greatest economy was practised, and the people were not over-burdened by taxation.

Elizabeth hated and detested war as the source of all calamities, and never embarked upon it except under compulsion. All her wars were virtually defensive, to maintain the honor, safety, and dignity of the nation. She did not even seek to recover Calais, which the French had held for three hundred years; although she took Havre, to gain a temporary foothold for her troops. She did not strive for military *éclat* or foreign possessions in Europe, feeling that the strength of England, like the ancient Jewish commonwealth, was in the cultivation of the peaceful virtues; and yet she made war when it became imperative. She gave free audience to her subjects, paid attention to all petitions, and was indefatigable in business. She made her own glory identical with the prosperity of the realm; and if she did not rule *by* the people, she ruled *for* the

people, as enlightened and patriotic monarchs ever have ruled. It is indisputable that the whole nation loved her and honored her to the last, even when disappointments had saddened her and the intoxicating delusions of life had been dispelled. She bestowed honors and benefits with frankness and cordiality. She ever sought to base her authority on the affections of the people, — the only support even of absolute thrones. She was ever ready with a witticism, a smile, and a pleasant word. Though she gave vent to peevishness and irritability when crossed, and even would swear before her ministers and courtiers in private, yet in public she disguised her resentments, and always appeared dignified and graceful; so that the people, when they saw her majestic manners, or heard her loving speeches, or beheld her mounted at the head of armies or shining unrivalled in grand festivals, or listened to her learning on public occasions, — such as when she extemporized Latin orations at Oxford, — were filled with pride and admiration, and were ready to expose their lives in her service.

The characteristic excellence of Elizabeth's reign, as it seems to me, was good government. She had extraordinary executive ability, directed to all matters of public interest. Her government was not marked by great and brilliant achievements, but by perpetual vigilance, humanity, economy, and liberal policy. There

were no destructive and wasting wars, no passion for military glory, no successions of court follies, no extravagance in palace-building, no egotistical aims and pleasures such as marked the reign of Louis XIV., which cut the sinews of national strength, impoverished the nobility, disheartened the people, and sowed the seeds of future revolution. That modern Nebuchadnezzar spent on one palace £40,000,000; while Elizabeth spent on all her palaces, processions, journeys, carriages, servants, and dresses £65,000 a year. She was indeed fond of visiting her subjects, and perhaps subjected her nobles to a burdensome hospitality. But the Earl of Leicester could well afford three hundred and sixty-five hogsheads of beer when he entertained the Queen at Kenilworth, since he was rich enough to fortify his castle with ten thousand men; nor was it difficult for the Earl of Derby to feast the royal party, when his domestic servants numbered two hundred and forty. She may have exacted presents on her birthday; but the courtiers who gave her laces and ruffs and jewelry received monopolies in return.

The most common charge against Elizabeth as a sovereign is, that she was arbitrary and tyrannical; nor can she be wholly exculpated from this charge. Her reign was despotic, so far as the Constitution would allow; but it was a despotism according to the laws. Under her reign the people had as much liberty as at

any preceding period of English history. She did not encroach on the Constitution. The Constitution and the precedents of the past gave her the Star Chamber, and the High Commission Court, and the disposal of monopolies, and the absolute command of the military and naval forces; but these great prerogatives she did not abuse. In her direst necessities she never went beyond the laws, and seldom beyond the wishes of the people.

It is expecting too much of sovereigns to abdicate their own powers except upon compulsion; and still more, to increase the political power of the people. The most illustrious sovereigns have never parted willingly with their own prerogatives. Did the Antonines, or Theodosius, or Charlemagne, or Frederic II.? The Emperor of Russia may emancipate serfs from a dictate of humanity, but he did not give them political power, for fear that it might be turned against the throne. The sovereign people of America may give political equality to their old slaves, and invite them to share in the legislation of great interests: it is in accordance with that theory of abstract rights which Rousseau, the creator of the French Revolution, propounded, — which gospel of rights was accepted by Jefferson and Franklin. The monarchs of the world have their own opinions about the political rights of those whom they deem ignorant or inexperienced.

Instead of proceeding to enlarge the bounds of popular liberties, they prefer to fall back on established duties. Elizabeth had this preference; but she did not attempt to take away what liberties the people already had. In encouraging the principles of the Reformation, she became their protector against religious prelates and feudal nobles.

It is not quite just to stigmatize the government of Elizabeth as a despotism. A despotism is a régime supported by military force, based on an army, with power to tax the people without their consent, — like the old rule of the Cæsars, like that of Louis XIV. and Peter the Great, and even of Napoleon. Now, Elizabeth never had a standing army of any size. When the country was threatened by Spain, she threw herself into the arms of the militia, — upon the patriotism and generosity of her people. Nor could she tax the people without the consent of Parliament, — which by a fiction was supposed to represent the people, while in reality it only represented the wealthy classes. Parliament possessed the power to cripple her, and was far less generous to her than it was to Queen Victoria. She was headed off both by the nobles and by the representatives of the wealthy, powerful, and aristocratic Commons. She had great prerogatives and great private wealth, palaces, parks, and arbitrary courts; but she could not go against the laws of the

realm without endangering her throne, — which she was wise enough and strong enough to keep, in spite of all her enemies both at home and abroad. Had she been a man, she might have turned out a tyrant and a usurper: she might have increased the royal prerogatives, like Richelieu; she might have made wars, like Louis XIV.; she might have ground down the people, like her successor James. But she understood the limits of her power, and did not seek to go beyond; thereby proving herself as wise as she was mighty.

By most historical writers Elizabeth is severely censured for the execution of Mary Queen of Scots, and I think with justice. I am not making a special plea in favor of Elizabeth, — hiding her defects and exaggerating her virtues, — but simply seeking to present her character and deeds according to the verdict of enlightened ages. It was a cruel and repulsive act to take away the life of a relative and a woman and a queen, under any pretence whatever, unless the sparing of her life would endanger the security of the sovereign and the peace of the realm. Mary was the granddaughter of Margaret Tudor, sister of Henry VIII., and was the lawful successor of Mary, the eldest daughter of Henry VIII. On the principle of legitimacy, she had a title to the throne superior to Elizabeth herself, and the succession of princes has ever been determined by this. But Mary was a Catholic, to say

nothing of her levities or crimes, and had been excluded by the nation for that very reason. If there was injustice done to her, it was in not allowing her claim to succeed Mary. That she felt that Elizabeth was a usurper, and that the English throne belonged by right to her, I do not doubt. It was natural that she should seek to regain her rights. If she should survive Elizabeth, her claims as the rightful successor could not be well set aside. That in view of these facts Elizabeth was jealous of Mary I do not doubt; and that this jealousy was one great cause of her hostility is probable.

The execution of Mary Stuart because she was a Catholic, or because she excited fear or jealousy, is utterly indefensible. All that the English nation had a right to do was to set her succession aside because she was a Catholic, and would undo the work of the Reformation. She had a right to her religion; and the nation also had a right to prevent its religion from being overturned or jeopardized. I do not believe, however, that Mary's life endangered either the throne or the religion of England, so long as she was merely Queen of Scotland; hence I look upon her captivity as cruel, and her death as a crime. She was destroyed as the male children of the Hebrews were destroyed by Pharaoh, as a sultan murders his nephews, — from fear; from a cold and cruel state policy, against all the higher laws of morality.

The crime of Elizabeth doubtless has palliations. She was urged by her ministers and by the Protestant part of the nation to commit this great wrong, on the plea of necessity, to secure the throne against a Catholic successor, and the nation from embarrassments, plots, and rebellions. It is an undoubted fact that Mary, even after her imprisonment in England, was engaged in perpetual intrigues; that she was leagued with Jesuits and hostile powers, and kept Elizabeth in continual irritation and the nation in constant alarm. And it is probable that had she succeeded Elizabeth, she would have destroyed all that was dear to the English heart, — that glorious Reformation, effected by so many labors and sacrifices. Therefore she was immolated to the spirit of the times, for reasons of expediency and apparent state necessity. That she conspired against the government of Elizabeth, and possibly against her life, was generally supposed; that she was a bitter enemy cannot be questioned. How far Elizabeth can be exculpated on the principle of self-defence cannot well be ascertained. Scotch historians do not generally accept the reputed facts of Mary's guilt. But if she sought the life of Elizabeth, and was likely to attain so bloody an end, — as was generally feared, — then Elizabeth has great excuses for having sanctioned the death of her rival.

So the beautiful and interesting Mary dies a martyr

to her cause, — a victim of royal and national jealousy, paying the penalty for alleged crimes against the state and throne. Had Elizabeth herself, during the life of her sister Mary, been guilty of half they proved against the Queen of Scots, she would have been most summarily executed. But Elizabeth was wise and prudent, and waited for her time. Mary Stuart was imprudent and rash. Her character, in spite of her fascinations and accomplishments, was full of follies, infidelities, and duplicities. She is supposed to have been an adulteress and a murderess. She was unfortunate in her administration of Scotland. She was ruled by wicked favorites and foreign influence. She was not patriotic, or lofty, or earnest. She did what she could to root out Protestantism in Scotland, and kept her own realm in constant trouble. She had winning manners and graceful accomplishments; she was doubtless an intellectual woman; she had courage, presence of mind, tact, intelligence; she could ride and dance well: but with these accomplishments she had qualities which made her dangerous and odious. If she had not been executed, she would have been execrated. But her sufferings and unfortunate death appeal to the heart of the world, and I would not fight against popular affections and sympathies. Though she committed great crimes and follies, and was supposed to be dangerous to the religion and

liberties of England, she died a martyr, — as Charles I. died, and Louis XVI., — the victim of great necessities and great animosities.

The execution of Essex is another of the popular rather than serious charges against Elizabeth. He had been her favorite; he was a generous, gifted, and accomplished man, — therefore, it is argued, he ought to have been spared. But he was caught with arms in his hands. He was a traitor to the throne which enriched him and the nation which flattered him. He was at the head of foolish rebellion, and therefore he died, — died like Montmorency in the reign of Henry IV., like Bassompierre, like Norfolk and Northumberland, because he had committed high-treason and defied the laws. Why should Elizabeth spare such a culprit? No former friendship, no chivalrous qualities, no array of past services, ever can offset the crime of treason and rebellion, especially in unsettled times; and Elizabeth would have been worse than weak had she spared so great a criminal, both according to the laws and precedents of England and the verdict of enlightened civilization. We may compassionate the fate of Essex; but he was rash, giddy, and irritated, and we feel that he deserved his punishment.

The other charges brought against Elizabeth pertain to her as a woman rather than a sovereign. They say that she was artful, dissembling, parsimonious, jealous,

haughty, and masculine. Very likely, — and what then? Who claimed that she was perfect, any more than other great sovereigns whom on the whole we praise? These faults, too, may have been the result of her circumstances, rather than native traits of character. Surrounded with spies and enemies, she was obliged to hide her thoughts and her plans. Irritated by treason and rebellions, she may have given vent to unseemly anger. Flattered beyond all example, she may have been vain and ostentatious. Possessed of great powers, she may have been arbitrary. Crippled by Parliament, she may have nursed her resources. Compelled to give to everything, she may have been parsimonious. Slandered by her enemies, she may have been resentful. Annoyed by wrangling sects, she may have too strenuously paraded her high-church principles.

But all these things we lose sight of in the undoubted virtues, abilities, and services of this great Queen. Historians have other work than to pick out spots on the sun. The dark spot, if there is one upon Elizabeth's character, was her coquetry in private life. It is impossible to tell whether or not she exceeded the bounds of womanly virtue. She was probably slandered and vilified by treacherous, gossiping ambassadors, who were foes to her person and her kingdom, and who made as ugly reports of her as possible to their royal masters. I am sorry that these malicious

accusations have been raked out of the ashes of the past by modern historians, whose literary fame rests on bringing to light what is *new* rather than what is *true*. The character of a woman and a queen so admired and honored in her day, should be sacred from the stings of sensational writers who poison their darts from the archives of bitter foreign enemies.

The gallant men of genius whom Elizabeth admired and honored — as a bright and intellectual woman naturally would, especially when deprived of the felicities of wedded life — never presumed, I have charity to believe, beyond an undignified partiality and an admiring friendship. When Essex stood highest in her favor, she was nearly seventy years of age. There are no undoubted facts which criminate her, — nothing but gossip and the malice of foreign spies. What a contrast her private life was to that of her mother Anne Boleyn, or to that of Mary, Queen of Scots, or even to that of the great Catherine of Russia! She had, indeed, great foibles and weaknesses. She was inordinately fond of dress; she was sensitive to her own good looks; she was jealous of pretty women; she was vain, and susceptible to flattery; she was irritable when crossed; she gave way to sallies of petulance and anger; she occasionally used language unbecoming her station and authority; she could dissimulate and hide her thoughts: but her nature was not hypocritical, or false, or mean.

She was just, honest, and straightforward in her ordinary dealings; she was patriotic, enlightened, and magnanimous; she loved learning and learned men; she had at heart the best interests of her subjects; she was true to her cause. Surely these great virtues, which it is universally admitted she possessed, should more than balance her defects and weaknesses. See how tender-hearted she was when required to sign death-warrants, and what grief she manifested when Essex proved unworthy of her friendship! See her love of children, her readiness of sympathy, her fondness for society, — all feminine qualities in a woman who is stigmatized as masculine, as she perhaps was in her mental structure, in her habits of command, and aptitude for business: a strong-minded woman at the worst, yet such a woman as was needed on a throne, especially in stormy times and in a rude state of society.

And when we pass from her private character to her public services, by which the great are judged, how exalted her claims to the world's regard! Where do we find a greater or a better queen? Contrast her with other female sovereigns, — with Isabella, who with all her virtues favored the Inquisition; with her sister Mary, who kindled the fires of Smithfield; with Catherine de Médicis, who sounded the tocsin of St. Bartholomew; with Mary of Scotland, who was a partner in the murder of her husband; with Anne of Austria,

who ruled through Italian favorites; with Christiana of Sweden, who scandalized Europe by her indecent eccentricities; with Anne of Great Britain, ruled by the Duchess of Marlborough. There are only two great sovereigns with whom she can be compared, — Catherine II. of Russia, and Maria Theresa of Germany, illustrious, like Elizabeth, for courage and ability. But Catherine was the slave of infamous passions, and Maria Theresa was a party to the partition of Poland. Compared with these even, the English queen appears immeasurably superior; they may have wielded more power, but their moral influence was less. It is not the greatness of a country which gives greatness to its exalted characters. Washington ruled our empire in its infancy; and Buchanan, with all its majestic resources, — yet who is dearest to the heart of the world? No countries ever produced greater benefactors than Palestine and Greece, when their limits were scarcely equal to one of our States. The fame of Burleigh burns brighter than that of the most powerful of modern statesmen. The names of Alexander Hamilton and Daniel Webster may outshine the glories of any statesmen who shall arise in this great country for a hundred years to come. Elizabeth ruled a little island; but her memory and deeds are as immortal as the fame of Pericles or Marcus Aurelius.

And the fame of England's great queen rests on the

influence which radiated from her character, as well as upon the power she wielded with so much wisdom and ability. Influence is greater than power in the lapse of ages. Politicians may wield power for a time; but the great statesmen, like Burke and Canning, live in their ideas. Warriors and kings, and ministers of kings, have power; but poets and philosophers have influence, for their ideas go coursing round the world until they have changed governments and institutions for better or for worse, — like those of Paul, of Socrates, of Augustine, of Dante, of Shakspeare, of Bacon, yea, of Rousseau. Some few favored rulers and leaders of men have had both power and influence, like Moses, Alfred, and Washington; and Elizabeth belongs to this class. Her influence was for good, and it permeated English life and society, like that of Victoria, whose power was small.

As a queen, however, more than a woman, Elizabeth is one of the great names of history. I have some respect for the critical verdict of Francis Bacon, the greatest man of his age, — if we except Shakspeare, — and one of the greatest men in the history of all nations. What does he say? He knew her well, perhaps as well as any modern historian. He says: —

"She was a princess, that, if Plutarch were now alive to write by parables, it would puzzle him to find her equal

among women. She was endowed with learning most singular and rare; and as for her government, I do affirm that England never had forty-five years of better times, and this, not through the calmness of the season, but the wisdom of her regimes. When we consider the establishment of religion, and the constant peace of the country, the good administration of justice, the flourishing state of learning, the increase of wealth, and the general prosperity, amid differences in religion, the troubles of neighboring nations, the ambition of Spain, and the opposition of Rome, I could not have chosen a more remarkable combination of learning in the prince with felicity of the people."

I can add nothing to this comprehensive verdict: it covers the whole ground. So that for virtues and abilities, in spite of all defects, I challenge attention to this noble queen. I love to dwell on her courage, her fortitude, her prudence, her wisdom, her patriotism, her magnanimity, her executive ability, and, more, on the exalted services she rendered to her country and to civilization. These invest her name with a halo of glory which shall blaze through all the ages, even as the great men who surrounded her throne have made her name illustrious.

The Elizabethan era is justly regarded as the brightest in English history; not for the number of its great men, or the magnificence of its great enterprises, or the triumphs of its great discoveries and inventions, but

because there were then born the great ideas which constitute the strength and beauty of our proud civilization, and because then the grandest questions which pertain to religion, government, literature, and social life were first agitated, with the freshness and earnestness of a revolutionary age. The men of that period were a constellation of original thinkers. We still point with admiration to the political wisdom of Cecil, to the sagacity of Walsingham, to the varied accomplishments of Raleigh, to the chivalrous graces of Sidney, to the bravery of Hawkins and Nottingham, to the bold enterprises of Drake and Frobisher, to the mercantile integrity and financial skill of Gresham, to the comprehensive intellect of Parker, to the scholarship of Ascham, to the eloquence of Jewel, to the profundity of Hooker, to the vast attainments and original genius of Bacon, to the rich fancy of Spenser, to the almost inspired insight of Shakspeare, towering above all the poets of ancient and of modern times, as fresh to-day as he was three hundred years ago, the greatest miracle of intellect that perhaps has ever adorned the world. By all these illustrious men Queen Elizabeth was honored and beloved. All received no small share of their renown from her glorious appreciation; all were proud to revolve around her as a central sun, giving life and growth to every great enterprise in her day, and shedding a light which shall gladden unborn generations.

It is something that a woman has earned such a fame, and in a sphere which has been supposed to belong to man alone. And if men shall here and there be found to decry her greatness, let no woman be found who shall seek to dethrone her from her lofty pedestal; for in so doing she unwittingly becomes a detractor from that womanly greatness in which we should all rejoice, and which thus far has so seldom been seen in exalted stations. For my part, the more I study history the more I reverence this great sovereign; and I am proud that such a woman has lived and reigned and died in honor.

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HENRY OF NAVARRE.

A. D. 1553–1610.

THE HUGUENOTS.

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IN this lecture I shall confine myself principally to the connection of Henry IV. with that memorable movement which came near making France a Protestant country. He is identified with the Huguenots, and it is the struggles of the Huguenots which I wish chiefly to present. I know he was also a great king, the first of the Bourbon dynasty, whose heroism in war was equalled only by his enlightened zeal in the civilization of France, — a king who more deeply impressed himself upon the affections of the nation than any monarch since Saint Louis, and who, had he lived to execute his schemes, would have raised France to the highest pitch of glory. Nor do I forget, that, although he fought for a great cause, and reigned with great wisdom and ability, and thus rendered important services to his country, he was a man of great defects of character, stained with those peculiar vices which disgraced most of the Bourbon kings, especially Louis XIV. and

Louis XV.; that his court was the scene of female gallantries and intrigues, and that he was more under the influence of women than was good for the welfare of his country or his own reputation. But the limits of this lecture will not permit me to dwell on his acts as a monarch, or on his statesmanship, his services, or his personal defects of character. I am obliged, from the magnitude of my subject, and from the necessity of giving it unity and interest, to confine myself to him as a leader of the Huguenots alone. It is not Henry himself that I would consider, so much as the struggles of the brave men associated with him, more or less intimately, in their attempt to secure religious liberty in the sixteenth century.

The sixteenth century! What a great era that was in comparison with the preceding centuries since Christianity was declared! From a religious and heroic point of view it was immeasurably a greater period than the nineteenth century, which has been marked chiefly for the triumphs of science, material progress, and social and political reforms. But in earnestness, in moral grandeur, and in discussions which pertain to the health and life of nations, the sixteenth century was greater than our own. Then began all sorts of inquiries about Nature and about mind, about revelation and Providence, about liberty of worship and freedom of thought; all of which were discussed with an enthu-

siasm and patience and boldness and originality to which our own times furnish no parallel. And united with this fresh and original agitation of great ideas was a heroism in action which no age of the world has equalled. Men risked their fortunes and their lives in defence of those principles which have made the enjoyment of them in our times the greatest blessing we possess. It was a new spirit that had arisen in our world to break the fetters which centuries of force and superstition and injustice had forged, — a spirit scornful of old authorities, yet not sceptical, with disgust of the past and hope for the future, penetrating even the hamlets of the poor, and kindling the enthusiasm of princes and nobles, producing learned men in every country of Europe, whose original investigations should put to the blush the commentators and compilers of this age of religious mediocrity and disguised infidelity. Such intellectual giants in the field of religious inquiry had not appeared since the Fathers of the Church combated the paganism of the Roman world, and will not probably appear again until the cycle of changes is completed in the domain of theological thought, and men are forced to meet the enemies of divine revelation marshalled in such overwhelming array that there will be a necessity for reformers, called out by a special Providence to fight battles, — as I regard Luther and Calvin and Knox. The great difference between the

sixteenth and nineteenth centuries, outside of material aspects, is that the former recognized the majesty of God, and the latter the majesty of man. Both centuries believed in progress; but the sixteenth century traced this progress to first, and the nineteenth to second causes. The sixteenth believed that human improvement was owing directly to special divine grace, and the nineteenth believes in the necessary development of mankind. The school of the sixteenth century was spiritual, that of the nineteenth is material; the former looked to heaven, the latter looks to earth. The sixteenth regarded this world as a mere preparation for the next, and the nineteenth looks upon this world as the future scene of indefinite and completed bliss. The sixteenth century attacked the ancient, the nineteenth attacks the eternal. The sixteenth destroyed, but reconstructed; the nineteenth also destroys, but would substitute nothing instead. The sixteenth reminds us of audacious youth, still clinging to parental authority; the nineteenth reminds us of cynical and irreverent old age, believing in nothing but the triumphs of science and art, and shaking off the doctrines of the ages as exploded superstitions.

The sixteenth century was marked not only by intensely earnest religious inquiries, but by great civil and social disorders, — showing a transition period of society from the slaveries and discomforts of the feudal

ages to the liberty and comforts of highly civilized life. In the midst of religious enthusiasm we see tumults, insurrections, terrible animosities, and cruel intolerance. War was associated with inhuman atrocities, and the expansion of the reformed faith was followed by bitter and heartless antagonisms. The feudal system had received a shock from standing armies and the invention of gunpowder and the central authority of kings, but it was not demolished. The nobles still continued to enjoy their social and political distinctions, the peasantry were ground down by unequal laws, and the nobles were as arrogant and quarrelsome as the people were oppressed by unjust distinctions. They were still followed by their armed retainers, and had almost unlimited jurisdiction in their respective governments. Even the higher clergy gloried in feudal inequalities, and were selected from the noble classes. The people were not powerful enough to make combinations and extort their rights, unless they followed the standards of military chieftains, arrayed perhaps against the crown and against the parliaments. We see no popular, independent political movements; even the people, like all classes above them, were firm and enthusiastic in their religious convictions.

The commanding intellect at that time in Europe was John Calvin (a Frenchman, but a citizen of Geneva), whom we have already seen to be a man of

marvellous precocity of genius and astonishing logical powers, combined with the most exhaustive erudition on all theological subjects. His admirers claim a distinct and logical connection between his theology and civil liberty itself. I confess I cannot see this. There was nothing democratic about Calvin. He ruled indeed at Geneva as Savonarola did in Florence, but he did not have as liberal ideas as the Florentine reformer about the political liberties of the people. He made his faith the dearest thing a man could have, to be defended unto death in the face of the most unrelenting persecution. It was the tenacity to defend the reformed doctrines, of which, next to Luther, Calvin was the greatest champion, which kindled opposition to civil rulers. And it was opposition to civil rulers who proved themselves tyrants which led to the struggle for civil liberty; not democratic ideas of right. These may have been the sequence of agitations and wars, but not their animating cause, — like the ideas of Rousseau on the French revolutionists. The original Puritans were not democratic; the Presbyterians of Scotland were not, even when Cromwell led the armies, but not the people, of England. The Huguenots had no aspirations for civil rights; they only aspired for the right of worshipping God according to the dictates of conscience. There was nothing popular in their notions of government when Henry IV. headed the forces of

the Huguenots; he only aimed at the recognition of religious rights. The Huguenots never rallied around popular leaders, but rather under the standards of princes and nobles fighting for the right of worshipping God according to the dictation or ideas of Calvin. They would preserve their schools, their churches, their consistories, and their synods; they would be unmolested in their religious worship.

Now, at the time when Henry IV. was born, in the year 1553, when Henry II. was King of France and Edward VI. was King of England, the ideas of the Reformation, and especially the doctrines of Calvin, had taken a deep and wide hold of the French people. The Calvinists, as they were called, were a powerful party; in some parts of France they were in a majority. More than a third of the whole population had enthusiastically accepted the reformed doctrines. They were in a fair way toward triumph; they had great leaders among the highest of the nobility. But they were bitterly hated by the king and the princes of the house of Valois, and especially by the Duke of Guise and the Cardinal of Lorraine, — the most powerful families in France, — because they meditated to overturn, not the throne, but the old established religion. The Pope instigated the most violent proceedings; so did the King of Spain. It was resolved to suppress the hated doctrines. The enemies of the Calvinists resorted

to intrigues and assassinations; they began a furious persecution, as they held in their hands the chief political power. Injustice succeeded injustice, and outrage followed outrage. During the whole reigns of the Valois Princes, treachery, assassinations, and bloody executions marked the history of France. Royal edicts forbid even the private assemblies of the Huguenots, on pain of death. They were not merely persecuted but calumniated. There was no crime which was not imputed to them, even that of sacrificing little children; so that the passions of the people were aroused against them, and they were so maltreated that all security was at an end. From a condition of hopeful progress, they were forced back and beaten down. Their condition became insupportable. There was no alternative but desperate resistance or martyrdom, for the complete suppression of Protestantism was resolved upon, on the part of the government. The higher clergy, the parliaments, the University of Paris, and the greater part of the old nobility supported the court, and each successive Prince of the house of Valois adopted more rigorous measures than his predecessor. Henry II. was more severe than Francis I.; and Francis II. was more implacable than Henry II., who was killed at a tournament in 1559. Francis II., a feeble prince, was completely ruled by his mother, Catherine de Médicis, an incarnated fiend of cruelty and treachery, though a woman of pleasing

manners and graceful accomplishments,—like Mary of Scotland, but without her levities. Under her influence persecution assumed a form which was truly diabolical. The Huguenots, although supported by the King of Navarre, the Prince of Condé, Coligny (Admiral of France), his brother the Seigneur d' Andelot, the Count of Montgomery, the Duke of Bouillon, the Duke of Soubise, all of whom were nobles of high rank, were in danger of being absolutely crushed, and were on the brink of despair. What if a third part of the people belonged to their ranks, when the whole power of the crown and a great majority of the nobles were against them; and these supported by the Pope and clergy, and stimulated to ferocity by the Jesuits, then becoming formidable?

At last the Huguenots resolved to organize and arm in their own defence, for there is a time when submission ceases to be a virtue. If ever a people had cause for resistance it was this persecuted people. They did not rise up against their persecutors with the hope of overturning the throne, or producing a change of dynasties, or gaining constitutional liberty, or becoming a political power hostile to the crown, like the Puritans under Cromwell or Hampden, but simply to preserve what to them was more precious than life. All that they demanded was a toleration of their religion; and as their religion was dearer to them than life, they wer

ready to undergo any sacrifices. Their resistance was more formidable than was anticipated; they got possession of cities and fortresses, and were able to defy the whole power of the crown. It was found impossible to suppress a people who fought with so much heroism, and who defied every combination. So truces and treaties were made with them, by which their religious rights were guaranteed. But these treaties were perpetually broken, for treachery is no sin with religious persecutors.

This Huguenotic contest, attended with so much vicissitude, alternate defeat and victory, and stained by horrid atrocities, was at its height when Henry IV. was a boy, and had no thought of ever being King of France. His father, Antoine de Bourbon, although King of Navarre and a prince of the blood, being a lineal descendant from Saint Louis, was really only a great noble, not so powerful as the Duke of Guise or the Duke of Montmorency; and even he, a leader of the rebellion, was finally won over to the court party by the seductions brought to bear on him by Roman priests. He was either bribed or intimidated, and disgracefully abjured the cause for which he at first gallantly fought. He died from a wound he received at the siege of Rouen, while commanding one of the armies of Charles IX., who succeeded his brother Francis II., in 1560.

The mother of the young prince, destined afterwards to be so famous, was one of the most celebrated women of history, — Jeanne D'Albret, niece of Francis I.; a woman who was equally extolled by men of letters and Calvinistic divines. She was as beautiful as she was good; at her castle in Pau, the capital of her hereditary kingdom of Navarre, she diffused a magnificent hospitality, especially to scholars and the lights of the reformed doctrines. Her kingdom was small, and was politically unimportant; but she was a sovereign princess nevertheless. The management of the young prince, her son, was most admirable, but unusual. He was delicate and sickly as an infant, and reared with difficulty; but, though a prince, he was fed on the simplest food, and exposed to hardships like the sons of peasants; he was allowed to run bareheaded and barefooted, exposed to heat and rain, in order to strengthen his constitution. Amid the hills at the base of the Pyrenees, in the company of peasants' children, he thus acquired simple and natural manners, and accustomed himself to fatigues and dangers. He was educated in the reformed doctrines, but was more distinguished as a boy for his chivalric graces, physical beauty, and manly sports than for seriousness of character or a religious life. He grew up a Protestant, from education rather than conviction. At twelve, in the year 1565, he was intrusted by his mother, the Queen of

Navarre, to the care of his uncle, the Prince of Condé, and, on his death, to Admiral Coligny, the acknowledged leader of the Protestants. He thus witnessed many bloody battles before he was old enough to be intrusted with command. At eighteen he was affianced to Marguerite de Valois, sister of Charles IX., in spite of differences of religion.

It was amid the nuptial festivities of the young King of Navarre, — his mother had died the year before, — when all the prominent leaders of the Protestants were enticed to Paris, that preparations were made for the blackest crime in the annals of civilized nations, — even the treacherous and hideous massacre of St. Bartholomew, perpetrated by Charles IX., who was incited to it by his mother, the ever-infamous Catherine de Médicis, and the Duke of Guise.

The Protestants, under the Prince of Condé and Admiral Coligny, had fought so bravely and so successfully in defence of their cause that all hope of subduing them in the field was given up. The bloody battles of Montcontour, of St. Denis, and of Jarnac had proved how stubbornly the Huguenots would fight; while their possession of such strong fortresses as Montauban and La Rochelle, deemed impregnable, showed that they could not easily be subdued. Although the Prince of Condé had been slain at the battle of Jarnac, this great misfortune to the Protestants was more

than balanced by the assassination of the great Duke of Guise, the ablest general and leader of the Catholics. So when all hope had vanished of exterminating the Huguenots in open warfare, a deceitful peace was made; and their leaders were decoyed to Paris, in order to accomplish, in one foul sweep, by wholesale murder, the diabolical design.

The Huguenot leaders were completely deceived. Old Admiral Coligny, with his deeper insight, hesitated to put himself into the power of a bigoted and persecuting monarch; but Charles IX. pledged his word for his safety, and in an age when chivalry was not extinguished, his promise was accepted. Who could believe that his word of honor would be broken, or that he, a king, could commit such an outrageous and unprecedented crime? But what oath, what promise, what law can bind a man who is a slave of religious bigotry, when his zeal requires a bloody and a cruel act? The end seemed to justify any means. I would not fix the stain of that infamous crime exclusively on any leader, church or state, or on the councillors of the King, or on his mother. I will not say that it was even exclusively a Church movement: it may have been equally an apparent State necessity. A Protestant prince might mount the throne of France, and with him, perhaps, the ascendency of Protestantism, or at least its protection. Such a catastrophe, as it seemed to the

councillors of Charles IX., must somehow be averted How could it be averted otherwise than by the removal of Henry himself, and his cousin Condé, and the brave old admiral, as powerful as Guise, as courageous as Du Gueslin, and as pious as Godfrey? And then, when these leaders were removed, and all the Protestants in Paris were murdered, who would remain to continue the contest, and what Protestant prince could hope to mount the throne? But whoever was directly responsible for the crime, and whatever may have been the motives for it, still it was committed. The first victim was Coligny himself, and the slaughter of fifty thousand persons followed in Paris and the provinces. The Admiral Coligny, Marquis of Chatillon, was one of the finest characters in all history, — brave, honest, truthful, sincere, with deep religious convictions, and great ability as a general. No Englishman in the sixteenth century can be compared with him for influence, heroism, and virtue combined. It was deemed necessary to remove this illustrious man, not because he was personally obnoxious, but because he was the leader of the Protestant party.

It is said that as the fatal hour approached to give the signal for the meditated massacre, Aug. 24, 1572 the King appeared irresolute and disheartened. Though cruel, perfidious, and weak, he shrank from committing such a gigantic crime, and this too in the face of his

royal promises. But there was one person whom no dangers appalled, and whose icy soul could be moved by no compassion and no voice of conscience. At midnight, Catherine entered the chamber of her irresolute son, in the Louvre, on whose brow horror was already stamped, and whose frame quivered with troubled chills. Coloring the crime with the usual sophistries of all religious and political persecution, that the end justifies the means, and stigmatizing him as a coward, she at last extorted from his quivering lips the fatal order; and immediately the tocsin of death sounded from the great bell of the church of St. Germain de Auxerrois. At once the slaughter commenced in every corner of Paris, so well were the horrid measures concerted. Screams of despair were mingled with shouts of vengeance; the cries of the murdered were added to the imprecations of the murderers; the streets flowed with blood, the dead rained from the windows, the Seine became purple. Men, women, and children were seen flying in every direction, pursued by soldiers, who were told that an insurrection of Protestants had broken out. No sex or age or dignity was spared, no retreat afforded a shelter, not even the churches of the Catholics. Neither Alaric nor Attila ever inflicted such barbarities. No besieged city taken by assault ever saw such wanton butcheries, except possibly Jerusalem when taken by Titus or Godfrey, or

Magdeburg when taken by Tilly. And as the bright summer sun illuminated the city on a Sunday morning the massacre had but just begun; nor for three days and three nights did the slaughter abate. A vulgar butcher appeared before the King and boasted he had slain one hundred and fifty persons with his own hand in a single night. For seven days was Paris the scene of disgraceful murder and pillage and violence. Men might be seen stabbing little infants, and even children were known to slaughter their companions. Nor was there any escape from these atrocities; the very altars which had once protected Christians from pagans were polluted by Catholic executioners. Ladies jested with unfeeling mirth over the dead bodies of murdered Protestants. The very worst horrors of which the mind could conceive were perpetrated in the name of religion. Following the consummation of this infamous crime against humanity, instigated by Catherine di Medici, the arch conspirator of these cruel times and mother of three Kings of France, the King and his Court proceeded in solemn procession to the cathedral of Notre Dame and returned thanks to God for the deliverance of France.

Nor did the bloody work stop here; orders were sent by the Government to every city and town of France to execute the like barbarities. The utter extermination of the Protestants was resolved upon throughout the

country. The slaughter was begun in treachery and was continued in the most heartless cruelty. When the news of it reached Rome, the Holy Father the Pope caused a medal to be struck in commemoration of the event, illuminated his capital, ordained general rejoicings, as if for some signal victory over the Turks; and, assisted by his cardinals and clergy, marched in glad procession to St. Peter's Church, and solemnly celebrated this massacre as a victory for the Church in France against the machinations of the Huguenots.

In former lectures I have passed rapidly and imperfectly over this awful crime, not wishing to stimulate passions which should be buried, and thinking it was more the fault of the age than of Catholic bigots; but I now present it in its naked deformity, to be true to history, and to show how cruel is religious intolerance, confirmed by the history of other inhumanities in the Catholic Church, — by the persecution of Dominican monks, by the slaughter of the Albigenses, by inquisitions, gunpowder plots, the cruelties of Alva, and that trail of blood which has marked the fairest portions of Europe by the hostilities of the Church of Rome in its struggles to suppress Protestant opinions. Protestantism, even in its persecutions, has never planned such a faithless crime as the massacre of St. Bartholomew. Mutual atrocities in the Civil War thereafter were awful; but savagery in fighting is not a pre-

pared, treacherous deviltry. Catholic historians do not pretend to deny the horrid facts, but ascribe the massacre to political animosities rather than religious, — a lame and impotent defence of an indefensible atrocity.

But this atrocity had such a demoniacal blackness and perfidy about it that it filled the whole Protestant world with grief and indignation, especially England, and had only the effect of binding together the Huguenots in a solid phalanx of warriors, resolved on making no peace with their perfidious enemies until their religious liberties were guaranteed. Though decimated, they were not destroyed; for the provincial governors and rural magistrates generally refused to execute the royal decrees, — their hearts were moved with pity. The slaughter was not universal, and Henry himself had escaped, his life being spared on condition of his becoming a Catholic, which as a matter of form he did.

Nevertheless, all Protestant eyes were now directed to him as their leader, since Coligny had perished by daggers, and Condé on the field of battle. Henry was still a young man, only twenty years of age, but able, intrepid, and wise. He and his cousin, the younger Condé, were still held as hostages, while the Huguenots again rallied and retired to their strong fortress of La Rochelle. Their last hopes centred in this fortress, defended by only fifteen thousand men, under the brave La Noue, while the royal army embraced

the flower of the French nobility, commanded by the Dukes of Anjou and Alençon. But these royal dukes were compelled to raise the siege, 1573, with a loss of forty thousand men. I regard the successful defence of this fortress, at this crisis, as the most fortunate event in the whole Huguenot contest, since it enabled the Huguenots to make a stand against the whole power of the monarchs. It did not give them victory, but gave them a place to rally; and it proclaimed the fact that the contest would not end until the Protestants had achieved their liberties or were utterly annihilated.

Soon after this successful and glorious defence of La Rochelle, Charles IX. died, at the age of twenty-four, in awful agonies, — the victim of remorse and partial insanity, in the hours of which the horrors of St. Bartholomew were ever present to his excited imagination, and when he beheld wild faces of demons and murdered Huguenots rejoicing in his torments, and heard strange voices consigning his name to infamy and his body to those never-ending physical torments in which both Catholics and Protestants equally believed. His mother however remained cold, inflexible, and unmoved, — for when a woman falls under the grip of the Devil, then no man can equal her in shamelessness and reckless sin.

Charles IX. was succeeded, in 1574, by his brother the King of Poland, under the name of Henry III.

who was equally under the control of his mother Catherine.

Two years afterward the King of Navarre succeeded in making his escape, and joined the Huguenot army at Tours. He was now twenty-three. He astonished the whole kingdom by his courage and intrepidity, — winning the hearts of the soldiers, and uniting them by strict military discipline. His friend and counsellor was Rosny, afterwards Duke of Sully, to whose wise counsels his future success may be in a great measure traced. Fortunate is the prince who will listen to frank and disagreeable advice; and that was one of the virtues of Henry, — a magnanimity which has seldom been equalled by generals.

The Huguenots were now able to make a stand in the open country, partly from additions to their numbers and partly from the mistakes and frivolities of Henry III., who alienated stern Catholics and his best friends. It was then that Bouillon, father of the illustrious Turenne joined the standard of Henry of Navarre. Soon after this, Henry became heir-apparent of the French throne. by the death of the Duke of Alençon, 1584. Only the King, Henry III., a man without children, and the last of the male line of the house of Valois, stood between Henry of Navarre and the throne. The possibility that he, a Protestant, might wield the sceptre of Saint Louis, his ancestor, increased the bitterness

and animosity of the Catholics. All the forces which the Government could raise were now arrayed against him and his party. The Pope, Sixtus V., in a papal bull, took away his hereditary rights; but fortune favored him. The Duke of Guise, who aspired to the throne, was himself assassinated, as his father had been; and now, by the orders of his jealous sovereign, his brother, the Cardinal of Guise, nephew of the Cardinal of Lorraine, — a man who held three archbishoprics, six bishoprics, and five abbeys, and these the richest in the kingdom, — shared the same fate And kind fate removed also, soon after, the most guilty and wicked of all the perpetrators of the massacre of St. Bartholomew, even Catherine de Médicis, — who would be regarded as a female monster, an incarnate fiend, a Messalina, or a Fredegunda, had she not been beautiful, with pleasing and gracious manners, a great fondness for society and music and poetry and art, — the most accomplished woman of her day, and so attractive as to be compared by the poets of her court to Aurora and Venus. Her life only shows how much heartlessness, cruelty, malignity, envy, and selfishness may be concealed by the mask of beauty and agreeable manners and artistic accomplishments.

The bloody battle of Coutras enabled Henry of Navarre to take a stand against the Catholics; but after the death of Henry III. by assassination, in 1589, his

struggles for the next five years were more to secure his hereditary rights as King of France than to lead the Huguenots to victory as a religious body. It might have been better for them had Henry remained the head of their party rather than become King of France, since he might not have afterwards deserted them. But there was really no hope of the Huguenots gaining a political ascendency at any time; they composed but a third part of the nation; their only hope was to secure their religious liberties

The most brilliant part of the military career of Henry IV. was when he struggled for his throne, supported of course by the Huguenots, and opposed by the whole Catholic party, the King of Spain, and the Pope of Rome. The Catholics, or the "Leaguers" as they were called, were led by the Duke of Mayenne. I need not describe the successes of Henry, until the battle of Ivry, March 14, 1590, made him really the monarch of France. On that eventful day both armies, having performed their devotions, were drawn out for action. Both armies knew that this battle would be decisive; and when all the arrangements were completed, Henry, completely covered with mail except his hands and head, mounted upon a great bay charger, galloped up and down the ranks, giving words of encouragement to his soldiers, and assuring them that he would either conquer or die. "If my standard fail you," said he,

"keep my plume in sight: you will always see it in the face of glory and honor." So saying, he put on his helmet, adorned with three white plumes, gave the order of battle, and, sword in hand, led the charge against the enemy. For some time the issue of the conflict was doubtful, for the forces were about equal; but at length victory inclined to the Protestants, who broke forth in shouts as Henry, covered with dust and blood, appeared at the head of the pursuing squadrons.

"Now, God be praised, the day is ours! Mayenne hath turned his rein,
D'Aumale hath cried for quarter, the Flemish count is slain.
Their ranks are breaking like thin clouds before a Biscay gale;
The field is heaped with bleeding steeds, and flags, and clover-mail;
And then we thought on vengeance, and all along our van
'Remember St. Bartholomew' was passed from man to man.
But out spake gentle Henry then: 'No Frenchman is my foe;
Down, down with every foreigner, but let your brethren go!'
Oh, was there ever such a knight, in friendship or in war,
As our sovereign lord, King Henry, the soldier of Navarre?"

The battle of Ivry, in which the forces of the League met with a complete overthrow, was followed by the siege of Paris, its memorable defence, and the arrival of the Duke of Parma, which compelled Henry to retire. Though he had gained a great victory, and received great accessions, he had to struggle four years longer, so determined were the Catholics; and he might have

had to fight a still longer time for his throne had he not taken the extraordinary resolution of abjuring his religion and cause. His final success was not doubtful, even as a Protestant king, since his title was undisputed; but he wearied of war. The peace of the kingdom and the security of the throne seemed to him a greater good than the triumph of the Huguenots. In that age great power was given to princes; he doubtless could have reigned as a Protestant prince had he persevered for a few years longer, and Protestantism would have been the established religion of France, as it was of England under Elizabeth. Henry as a Protestant king would have had no more enemies, or difficulties, or embarrassments than had the Virgin Queen, who on her accession found only one bishop willing to crown her. He had all the prestige of a conqueror, and was personally beloved, besides being a man of ability. His prime minister, Sully, was as able a man as Burleigh, and as good a Protestant; and the nation was enthusiastic. The Huguenots had deeper convictions, and were more logical in their creed, than the English Episcopalians. Leagued with England and Holland and Germany, France could have defied other Catholic powers, — could have been more powerful politically. Protestantism would have had the ascendency in Europe.

But it was not to be. To the mind of the King

he had nothing before him but protracted war, unless he became a Catholic; and as all the Huguenots ever struggled for was religious toleration, he would, as king, grant this toleration, and satisfy all parties. He either had no deep religious convictions, like Coligny and Dandelot, or he preferred an undisturbed crown to the ascendency of the religion for which he had so bravely fought. What matter, the tempter said, whether he reigned as a Catholic or Protestant monarch, so long as religious liberty was given to his subjects? Could he have reigned forever, could he have been assured of the toleration of his successors, this plea might have had some force; but it was the dictate of expediency, and no man can predict its ultimate results. He was not a religious man, although he was the leader of the Protestant party. He was far from being even moral in his social relations; still less had he the austerity of manners and habits that then characterized the Huguenots, for they were Calvinists and Presbyterians. He was gallant, brave, generous, magnanimous, and patriotic, — the model of a gentleman, the impersonation of chivalry, the charm of his friends, the idol of his army, the glory of his country; but there his virtues stopped. He was more of a statesman than the leader of a party. He wanted to see France united and happy and prosperous more than he wanted to see the ascendency of the Huguenots. He was now

not the King of Navarre, — a small country, scarcely thirty miles long, — but the King of France, ruling, as he aspired, from the Pyrenees to the Rhine. So it is not strange that he was governed by the principles of expediency, as most monarchs are. He wished to aggrandize his monarchy; that aim was dearer to him than the reformed faith. Coligny would have fought to the bitter end to secure the triumph of the Protestant cause; but Henry was not so lofty a man as the Admiral, — he had not his religious convictions, or stern virtues, or incorruptible life. He was a gallant monarch, an able general, a far-reaching statesman, yet fond of pleasure and of the glories of a court.

So Henry made up his mind to abjure his faith. On Sunday the 25th of July, 1593, clad not in helmet and cuirass and burnished steel, as at Ivry, but in a doublet of white satin, and a velvet coat ornamented with jewels and orders and golden fleurs de lis, and followed by cardinals and bishops and nobles, he entered the venerable Abbey of St. Denis, where reposed the ashes of all his predecessors, from Dagobert to Henry III., and was received into the bosom of the Catholic Church. A solemn Te Deum was then chanted by unnumbered priests; and the lofty pillars, the marble altars, the storied effigies, the purple windows, and the vaulted roof of that mediæval monument re-echoed to the music of those glorious anthems which were sung ages before

the most sainted of the kings of France was buried in the crypt. The partisans of the Catholic faith rejoiced that a heretic had returned to the fold of true believers; while the saddened, disappointed, humiliated members of the reformed religion felt, and confessed with shame, that their lauded protector had committed the most lamentable act of apostasy since the Emperor Julian abjured Christianity. It is true they palliated his conduct and remained faithful to his standard; but they felt he had committed a great blunder, if it were not a great crime. They knew that their cause was lost, — lost by him who had been their leader. Truly could they say, "Put not your trust in princes." To the irreligious, but worldly-wise, Henry had made a grand stroke of policy; had gained a kingdom well worth a Mass, had settled the disorders of forty years, had united both Catholics and Protestants in fealty to his crown, and was left at leisure to develop the resources of the nation, and lay a foundation for its future greatness.

I cannot here enumerate Henry IV.'s services to France, after the long civil war had closed; they were very great, and endeared him to the nation. He proved himself a wise and beneficent ruler; with the aid of the transcendent abilities of Sully, whose counsels he respected, he reduced taxation, founded schools and libraries, built hospitals, dug canals, repaired fortifi-

cations, restrained military license, punished turbulence and crime, introduced useful manufactures, encouraged industry, patronized learning, and sought to perpetuate peace. He aimed to be the father of his people, and he was the protector of the poor. His memorable saying is still dear to the hearts of Frenchmen: "I hope so to manage my kingdom that the poorest subject of it may eat meat every day in the week, and moreover be enabled to put a fowl into the pot every Sunday." I should like to point out his great acts and his enlightened policy, especially his effort to create a balance of power in Europe. The settlement of the finances and the establishment of various industries were his most beneficial acts. The taxes were reduced one half, and at his death he had fifty millions in the treasury, — a great sum in those days, — having paid off a debt of three hundred millions in eight years.

These and other public services showed his humane nature and his enlightened mind, until, after a glorious reign of twenty-one years, he was cut off, in the prime of his life and in the midst of his usefulness, by the assassin's dagger, May, 1610. in the fifty-eighth year of his age, — the greatest of all the French kings, — leaving five children by his second wife, Marie de Médicis, four of whom became kings or queens.

But to consider particularly Henry's connection with the Huguenots. If he deserted their ranks, he did not

forget them. He gave them religious toleration, — all they originally claimed. In 1598 was signed the memorable edict of Nantes, by which the Protestants preserved their churches, their schools, their consistories, and their synods; and they retained as a guarantee several important cities and fortresses, — a sort of *imperium in imperio*. They were made eligible to all offices. They were not subjected to any grievous test-act. They enjoyed social and political equality, as well as unrestricted religious liberty, except in certain cities. They gained more than the Puritans did in the reign of Charles II. They were not excluded from universities, nor degraded in their social rank, nor annoyed by unjust burial laws. The two religions were placed equally under the protection of the government. By this edict the Huguenots gained all that they had struggled for.

Still, the abjuration of Henry IV. was a great calamity to them. They lost their prestige; they were in a minority; they could count no longer on the leadership of princes. They were deprived gradually of the countenance of powerful nobles and all the potent influences of fashion; and when a reaction against Calvinism took place in the seventeenth century, the Huguenots had dwindled to a comparatively humble body of unimportant people. They lost heart and men of rank to defend them when the persecution of Richelieu overtook

them in the next reign. They were then unfit to contend successfully with that centralized monarchy of which Henry IV. had laid the foundation, and which Richelieu cemented by fraud and force. Louis XIV., educated by the Jesuits and always under their influence, repealed the charter which Henry IV. had given them. The persecution they suffered under Louis XIV. was more dreadful than that they suffered under Charles IX., since they had neither arms, nor organization, nor leaders, nor fortresses. Under the persecution of the Valois princes they had Condé and the King of Navarre and Coligny for leaders; they were strong enough to fight for their liberties, — they had enthusiasm and prestige and hope. Under the iron and centralized government of Louis XIV. they were completely defenceless, like lambs before wolves; they had no hopes, they could make no defence; they were an obnoxious, slandered, unimportant, unfashionable people, and their light had gone out. They had no religious enthusiasm even; they were small farmers and tradesmen and servants, and worshipped God in dingy chapels. No great men arose among them, as among the Puritans of England. They were still evangelical in their creed, but not earnest in defending it; so persecution wiped them out — was terribly successful. Eight hundred thousand of them perished in prisons and galleys or on scaffolds, and there was no help.

Henry IV., when he gave toleration to the Huguenots, never dreamed that his successors would undo his work. Had he foreseen that concession to the unchanged and unchangeable enemies of human freedom would have ended as it did, I believe his noble heart would have revolted from any peace until he could have reigned as a Protestant king. Oh, had he struggled a little longer for his crown, how different might have been the subsequent history of France, and even Europe itself! How much greater would have been his own fame! Even had he died as the defender of Protestant liberties, a greater glory than that of Gustavus would have been his forever. The immediate results of his abjuration were doubtless beneficial to himself, to the Huguenots, and to his country. Expediency gives great rewards; but expediency cannot control future events, — it is short-sighted, and only for the time successful. Ask you for the ultimate results of the abjuration of Henry IV., I point to the demolition of La Rochelle, under Richelieu, and the systematic humiliation of the Huguenots; I point to the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, by Louis XIV., and the bitter and cruel and wholesale persecution which followed; I point to the atrocities of the dragonnades and the exile of the Huguenots to England and America and Holland; I point to the extinction of civil and religious liberty in France, — to the restoration of the

Jesuits, — to the prevalence of religious indifference throughout every grade of society, until at last it threw off the mask and defied all authority, both human and divine, and invoked all the maddening passions of Revolution itself.

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GUSTAVUS ADOLPHUS.

1594–1632.

THE THIRTY YEARS' WAR (1618–1648).

GUSTAVUS ADOLPHUS.

THE THIRTY YEARS' WAR.

THE Thirty Years' War, of which Gustavus Adolphus was the greatest hero, was the result of those religious agitations which the ideas of Luther produced. It was the struggle to secure religious liberty, — a warfare between Catholic and Protestant Germany. It differed from the Huguenot contest in this, — that the Protestants of France took up arms against their king to extort religious privileges; whereas the Protestants of Germany were marshalled by independent princes against other independent princes of a different religion, who sought to suppress Protestantism. In this warfare between Catholic and Protestant States, there were great political entanglements and issues that affected the balance of power in Europe. Hence the Thirty Years' War was political as well as religious. It was not purely a religious war like the crusades, although religious ideas gave rise to it. Nor was it an insurrection

of the people against their rulers to secure religious rights, so much as a contest between Catholic and Protestant princes to secure the recognition of their religious opinions in their respective States.

The Emperor of Germany in the time of Luther was Charles V., — the most powerful potentate of Europe, and, moreover, a zealous Catholic. On his abdication, — one of the most extraordinary events in history, — the German dominions were given to his brother Ferdinand; Spain and the Low Countries were bestowed on his son Philip. Ferdinand had already been elected King of the Romans. There was a close alliance between these princes of the House of Austria to suppress Protestantism in Europe. The new Austrian emperor was not, indeed, so formidable as his father had been, but was still one of the greatest monarchs of Europe; and so powerful was the House of Austria that it excited the jealousy of the other European powers. It was to prevent the dangerous ascendency of Austria that Henry IV. of France raised a great army with a view of invading Germany, but was assassinated before he could carry his scheme into execution. He had armed France to secure what is called the "balance of power;" and it was with the view of securing this balance of power that Cardinal Richelieu, though a prince of the Church, took the side of the Protestants in the Thirty Years' War. This famous contest may therefore be

regarded as a civil war, dividing the German nations; as a religious war, to establish freedom of belief; and as a war to prevent the ascendency of Austria, in which a great part of Europe was involved.

The beginning of the contest, however, was the result of religious agitation. The ideas of Luther created universal discussion. Discussion led to animosities. All Germany was in a ferment: and the agitation was not confined to those States which accepted the Reformation, but to Catholic States also. The Catholic princes resolved to crush the Reformation, first in their own dominions, and afterwards in the other States of Germany. Hence, a bloody persecution of the Protestants took place in all Catholic States. Their sufferings were unendurable. For a while they submitted to the cruel lash, but at last they resolved to defend the right of worshipping God according to their consciences. They armed themselves, for death seemed preferable to religious despotism. For more than fifty years after the death of Luther, Germany was the scene of commotions ending in a fiery persecution. At that time Germany was in advance of the rest of Europe in wealth and intelligence; the Protestants especially were kindled to an enthusiasm, pertaining to theological questions, which we in these times can but feebly realize; and the Germans were doubtless the most earnest and religious people in Europe. In those days there

was neither religious indifference nor scepticism nor rationalism. The faith of the people was simple, and they were resolved to maintain it at any cost. But there were religious parties and asperities, even among the Protestants. The Lutherans would not unite with the Calvinists, and the Calvinists would not accede to the demands of the Lutherans.

After a series of struggles with the Catholics, the Lutherans succeeded, by the treaty of Augsburg (1555), in securing toleration; and this toleration lasted during the reigns of Ferdinand I. and Maximilian II. Indeed, Germany enjoyed tranquillity until the reign of Matthias, in 1612. This usurping emperor, who had delivered Germany from the Turks, abolished in his dominions the Protestant religion, so far as edicts and persecution could deprive the Protestants of their religious liberties. Matthias died in 1619, and was succeeded by Ferdinand II., a bigoted prince, who had been educated by the Jesuits. This emperor was an inveterate enemy of the Protestants. He forbade their meetings, deprived them even of civil privileges, pulled down their churches and schools, erected scaffolds in every village, appointed only Catholic magistrates, and inflicted unsparing cruelties on all who seceded from the Catholic church.

It was under this Austrian emperor, seventy-three years from the death of Luther, that the first act of

the bloody tragedy which I am to describe was opened by an insurrection in Bohemia, one of the hereditary possessions of the House of Austria.

In this kingdom, isolated from the rest of Germany, separated on every side from adjoining States by high mountains of volcanic origin, peopled with the descendants of the ancient Sclavonians, who were characterized by impulse and impetuosity, the reformed doctrines had taken a powerful hold of the affections and convictions of the people. The followers of John Huss and Jerome of Prague were something like the Lollards of England, in their spirit and sincerity. But they were persecuted by their Catholic rulers with a rigor and cruelty never seen among the Lollards; for Ferdinand II. was the hereditary king of Bohemia as well as emperor of Germany.

At last his tyranny and cruelties became unendurable, and in a violent burst of passionate indignation his deputies were thrown out of the windows of the chamber of the Council of Regency at Prague. This act of violence was the signal of a general revolt, not in Bohemia merely, but in Silesia, Moravia, Hungary, and Austria. The celebrated Count Mansfeld, a soldier of fortune, with only four thousand troops, dared to defy the whole imperial power; and for a while he was successful. The Bohemians renounced their allegiance to Ferdinand, and chose for their king Frederick V.—

Elector Palatine of the Rhine, son-in-law of James I. of England, and head of the Protestant party in Germany. He unwisely abandoned his electoral palace at Heidelberg, to grasp the royal sceptre at Prague. But he was no match for the Austrian emperor, who, summoning from every quarter the allies and adherents of imperial power, and making peace with other enemies, poured into Bohemia such overwhelming forces under Maximilian, Duke of Bavaria, that his authority was established more firmly than before. The battle of Prague (1620) decided the fate of Bohemia, and the Elector Palatine became a fugitive, and his possessions were given to the Duke of Bavaria.

Then followed a persecution which has had no parallel since the slaughter of the Albigenses and the massacre of St. Bartholomew. The unhappy kingdom of Bohemia was abandoned to inquisitions and executions; all liberties were suppressed, the nobles were decimated, ministers and teachers were burned or beheaded, and Protestants of every rank, age, and condition were prohibited from acting as guardians to children, or making wills, or contracting marriages with Catholics, or holding any office of trust and emolument. They were outlawed as felons, and disfranchised as infidels. The halls of justice were deserted, the Muses accompanied the learned in their melancholy flight, and all that remained of Bohemian gallantry and heroism forsook the land.

Strange to say, the land of Huss and Jerome became henceforth the strongest hold of Austrian despotism and papal influence.

This is one of those instances where persecution proved successful. It is a hackneyed saying that "the blood of martyrs is the seed of the Church;" and it is true that lofty virtues have been generally developed by self-sacrifice and martyrdom, and that only through great tribulation have permanent blessings been secured. The Hollanders, by inundating their fields and fighting literally to the "last ditch," preserved their liberties and secured ultimate prosperity. The fires of Smithfield did not destroy the reformed religion in England in the time of Mary, and the jails and judicial murders of later and better times did not prevent the progress of popular rights, or the extension of Puritanism in the wilds of the American continent. But in the history of society the instances are unfortunately numerous when bigotry and despotism have kindled their infernal fires and erected their bloody scaffolds, not to purify the Church and nourish the principles of Christian progress, but to destroy what is good as well as what is evil. What availed the struggles of the Waldenses in the Middle Ages? Who came to the rescue of Savonarola when he attempted to reform the lives of degenerate Florentines? What beneficial effects resulted ultimately from the Inquisition in Spain?

How was the revocation of the edict of Nantes over ruled for the good of the Huguenots of France?

And yet the unfortunate suppression of religious liberty in Bohemia, and the sufferings of those who came to her rescue, especially the misfortunes of the Elector Palatine, arrayed the Protestant princes of Germany against the Emperor, and created general indignation throughout Europe. Austria became more than ever a hated and dreaded power, not merely to the States of Sweden, Denmark, Holland, and England, but to Catholic France herself, then ruled by that able and ambitious statesman Cardinal Richelieu, before whose tomb in an after age the czar Peter bowed in earnest homage from the recollection and admiration of his transcendent labors in behalf of absolutism. Even Richelieu, a prince of the Church and the persecutor of the Huguenots, was alarmed at the encroachments of Austria, and intrigued with Protestant princes to undermine her dangerous ascendency.

Then opened the second act of the bloody drama of the seventeenth century, when the allied Protestant princes of Germany, assisted by the English and the Dutch, rallied under the leadership of Christian, King of Denmark, and resolved to recover what they had lost; while Bethlen Gabor, a Transylvanian prince, at the head of an army of robbers, invaded Hungary and Austria. The Emperor, straitened in his finances, was

in no condition to meet this powerful confederacy, although the illustrious Tilly was the commander of his forces.

But the demon of despotism, who never sleeps, raised up to his assistance a great military genius. This was Wallenstein, Duke of Friedland, the richest noble in Bohemia. The person whom he most resembled, in that age of struggle and contending forces, when despotism sought unscrupulous agents, was Thomas Wentworth, Earl of Strafford, — the right hand of Charles I., in his warfare against the liberties of England. Like Strafford, he was an apostate from the principles in which he had been educated; like him, he had arisen from a comparatively humble station; like him, his talents were as commanding as his ambition, — devoted first to his own exaltation; and, secondly, to the cause of absolutism, with which he sympathized with all the intensity that a proud and domineering spirit may be supposed to feel for the struggles of inexperienced democracy. Like the English statesman, the German general was skilled in the use of tools, jealous of his authority, liberal in his rewards, and fearful in his vengeance. Though greedy of admiration and fond of display, he surrounded himself with mystery and gloom. Like Strafford, he was commanding in his person, dignified, reserved, and sullen; with an eye piercing and melancholy, a brow lowering with thought and care.

and a lip compressed into determination and twisted into a smile of ironical disdain.

This nobleman had fought with distinction as a colonel at the battle of Prague, when Bohemian liberties had been prostrated, and had signally distinguished himself in his infamous crusade against his own countrymen. He offered, at his own expense, to raise and equip an army of fifty thousand men in the service of the Emperor; but demanded as a condition, that he should have the appointment of all his officers, and the privilege of enriching himself and army from the spoils and confiscations of conquered territories. These terms were extraordinary and humiliating to an absolute sovereign, yet, at the crisis in which Ferdinand was placed, they were too tempting to be refused.

Wallenstein fulfilled his promises, and raised in an incredibly short time an immense army, composed of outlaws and robbers and adventurers from all nations. He advanced rapidly against the allied Protestant forces, levying enormous contributions wherever he appeared; as imperious to friends as to foes, mistrusted and feared by both, yet supremely indifferent to praise or censure; resting on the power of brute force and his ability to enrich his soldiers. Possessing a fine military genius, unbounded means, and unscrupulous rapacity, and assisted by such generals as Tilly, Pappenheim, and Piccolomini, seconded by Maximilian, Duke of Bavaria

he soon reduced his enemies to despair. The King of Denmark was unequal to the contest, and sued for peace. The Elector Frederic again became a fugitive, the Duke of Brunswick was killed, and the intrepid Mansfeld died. The Electors of Saxony and Brandenburg, the natural defenders of Protestantism and the leading princes of the league, were awed into an abject neutrality. The old protectors of Lutheranism were timid and despairing. The monarchs of Europe trembled. Germany lay prostrate and bleeding. Christendom stood aghast at the greatness of the calamities which afflicted Germany and threatened neighboring nations.

But the Emperor at Vienna was overjoyed, and swelled with arrogance and triumph. He divided among the members of his imperial house the rich benefices of the Church, and bestowed upon his victorious general the revenues of provinces. He now resolved to pursue the King of Denmark into his remotest territories to dethrone the King of Sweden, to give away the crown of Poland, to aid the Spaniards in the recovery of the United Provinces, to exterminate the Protestant religion, to subvert the liberties of the German nations, and reign as a terrible incarnation of imperial tyranny. He would even revive the dreams of Charlemagne and Charles V., and make Vienna the centre of that power which once emanated from Rome. He would ally him-

self more strongly with the Pope, and extend the double tyranny of church and state over the whole continent of Europe. Fines, imprisonments, tortures, banishments, and executions were now added to the desolations which one hundred and fifty thousand soldiers inflicted on villages and cities that had been for generations increasing in wealth and prosperity.

In that dark hour of calamity and fears, Providence raised up a greater hero than Wallenstein, a noble protector and intrepid deliverer, even Gustavus Adolphus, King of Sweden; and the third act of the political tragedy opens with his brilliant career.

Carlyle has somewhere said: "Is not every genius an impossibility until he appear?" This is singularly true of Gustavus Adolphus. It was the last thing for contemporaries to conjecture that the deliverer of Germany, and the great hero of the Thirty Years' War, would have arisen in the ice-bound regions of northern Europe. No great character had arisen in Sweden of exalted fame, neither king nor poet, nor philosopher, nor even singer. The little kingdom, to all appearance, was rich only in mines of iron and hills of snow. It was not till the middle of the sixteenth century that Sweden was even delivered from base dependence on Denmark.

But Gustavus before he was thirty-five years of age

had made his countrymen a nation of soldiers; had freed his kingdom from Danish, Russian, and Polish enemies; had made great improvements in the art of war, having introduced a new system of tactics never materially improved except by Frederic II.; had reduced strategy to a science; had raised the importance of the infantry, had increased the strictness of military discipline, had trained up a band of able generals, and inspired his soldiers with unbounded enthusiasm.

And he had raised in the camp a new tone of moral feeling. Not even Cromwell equalled him in divesting war of its customary atrocities, and keeping alive the spirit of religion. The worship of God formed one of the most important duties of the Swedish army wherever located. "Twice every day the roll of the drum assembled the soldiers to prayer. The usual vices of soldiers, like profanity and drunkenness and gambling, were uniformly punished. Death was inflicted on any soldier who assaulted a citizen in his house. Even a certificate was required of the chief citizens of any place where troops were quartered, that their conduct had been orderly. He never allowed, under any provocation, a city to be taken by assault, — a striking contrast to the imperial generals."

Nor amid the toils and dangers of war was Gustavus unmindful of his duties as a king. He was one of the most enlightened statesmen that had appeared since

Charlemagne and Alfred. He established schools and colleges, founded libraries, reformed the codes of law, introduced wise mercantile regulations, rewarded eminent merit, respected the voice of experience, and developed the industries of the country. What Richelieu and Colbert did for France, what Burleigh and Cromwell did for England, Gustavus did for Sweden. His prime minister is illustrious for wisdom and ability, the celebrated Oxenstiern, through whose labors and genius the country felt no impoverishment from war. He laid the foundation of that prosperity which made a little kingdom great.

But all his excellences as a general, a statesman, and a ruler paled before the exalted virtues of his private life. His urbanity, his gentleness, his modesty, his meekness, his simplicity, and his love won all hearts, and have never been exceeded except by Alfred the Great. He was a Saint Louis on a throne, in marked contrast with the suspicion, duplicity, roughness, and egotism of Oliver Cromwell, — the only other great man of the century who equalled Gustavus in the value of public services and enlightened mind. It is not often that Christian graces and virtues are developed amid the tumults of war. David lost nothing of his pious fervor and reliance on God when pursuing the Philistines, nor Marcus Aurelius when fighting barbarians on the frozen Danube. The perils and vicisssitudes

of war, with the momentous interests involved, made Lincoln shine, amid all his jokes, a firm believer in the overruling power that Napoleon failed to see. And so of Washington: he was a better man and firmer Christian from the responsibilities that were thrust upon him. Not so with Frederic the Great, and the marshals of Louis XIV., with the exception of Turenne: war seemed rather to develop their worst qualities. It usually makes a man unscrupulous, hard, and arrogant. Military life is anything but interesting in the usual bearing of Prussian officers. In our own Revolutionary war, generals developed pride and avarice and jealousy. War turned Tilly into a fiend. How cold and sullen and selfish it made Napoleon! How grasping and greedy it made Marlborough! How unscrupulous it made Clive and Hastings! How stubborn and proud it made Wellington! How vain and pompous it made Scott! How overbearing it made Belle-Isle and Villars! How reckless and hard it made Ney and Murat! The dangers and miseries of war develop sternness, hardness, and indifference to suffering. It is violence; and violence does not naturally produce the peaceful virtues. It produces courage, indeed, but physical rather than moral, — least of all, that spiritual courage which makes martyrs and saints. It makes boon companions, not friends. It gives exaggerated ideas of self-importance. It exalts the outward and material, not the spiritual

and the real. The very tread of a military veteran is stately, proud, and conscious, — like that of a procession of cardinals, or of railway kings.

So that when a man inured to camps and battles shines in the modest unconsciousness of a Christian gentleman or meditative sage, we feel unusual reverence for him. We feel that his soul is unpolluted, and that he is superior to ordinary temptations.

And nothing in war develops the greatness of the higher qualities of heart and soul but the sacredness of a great cause. This takes a man out of himself, and binds his soul to God. He learns to feel that he is merely an instrument of Almighty power. It was the sacredness of a great cause that shed such a lustre on the character of Washington. How unimpressible the victories of Charlemagne, disconnected with that work of civilization which he was sent into the world to reconstruct! How devoid of interest and grandeur were the battles of Marston Moor and Worcester, without reference to those principles of religious liberty which warmed the soul of Cromwell! The conflicts of Bunker Hill and Princeton were insignificant when compared with the mighty array of forces at Blenheim or Austerlitz; but when associated with ideas of American independence, and the extension of American greatness from the Atlantic to the Pacific, their sublime results are impressed upon the mind with

ever-increasing power. Even French soldiers have seldom been victorious unless inspired by ideas of liberty or patriotism. It is ever the majesty of a cause which makes not only great generals but good men. And it was the greatness of the cause with which Gustavus Adolphus was identified that gave to his character such moral beauty,—that same beauty which exalted William the Silent, the Prince of Orange amid the disasters of his country, and made him eternally popular. After all, the permanent idols of popular idolatry are not the intellectually great, but the morally beautiful,—and all the more attractive when their moral excellence is in strong contrast with the prevailing vices of contemporaries. It was the moral greatness of Gustavus which has given to him his truest fame. Great was he as a military genius, but greater still as a benefactor of oppressed peoples.

Surely it was no common hero who armed himself for the deliverance of Germany, which prostrate and bleeding held out her arms to be rescued from political degradation, and for the preservation of liberties dearer to good men than life itself. All Protestant Europe responded to the cry; for great interests were now at stake, not in Germany merely, but in the neighboring nations. It was to deliver his Lutheran brethren in danger of extermination, and to raise a barrier against the overwhelming power of Austria, that Gustavus Adolphus

lent his armies to the Protestant princes of Germany. Other motives may have entered into his mind; his pride had been piqued by the refusal of the Emperor Ferdinand to acknowledge his title as King; his dignity was wounded by the contemptuous insolence shown to his ambassadors; his fears were excited that Austria might seek to deprive him of his throne. The imperial armies had already conquered Holstein and Jutland, — provinces that belonged to Sweden. Unless Austria were humbled, Sweden would be ruined. Gustavus embarked in the war against Austria, as William III. afterwards did against Louis XIV. Wars to preserve the "balance of power" have not generally been deemed offensive, when any power has become inordinately aggrandized. Pitt opposed Napoleon, to rescue Europe from universal monarchy.

So Gustavus, deeply persuaded of the duties laid upon him, assembled together the deputies of his kingdom, — the representatives of the three estates, — and explained to them his intentions and motives. "I know," said he, "the dangers I am about to encounter; I know that it is probable I shall never return; I feel convinced that my life will terminate on the field of battle. Let no one imagine that I am actuated by private feelings or fondness for war. My object is to set bounds to the increasing power of a dangerous empire before all resistance becomes impossible. Your

children will not bless your memory if, instead of civil and religious freedom, you bequeath to them the superstitions of monks and the double tyranny of popes and emperors. We must prevent the subjugation of the Continent before we are reduced to depend upon a narrow sea as the only safeguard of our liberties; for it is delusion to suppose that a mighty empire will not be able to raise fleets, if once firmly established on the shores of the ocean." Then taking his infant daughter Christiana in his arms, he recommended her to the protection of the nation, and bade adieu to the several orders of the State. Amid their tears and sobs, he invoked upon them and his enterprise the blessing of Almighty God. Then, hastening his preparations, he embarked his forces for the deliverance of Germany. It was on the 24th of June, 1630, just one hundred years after the confession of Augsburg, that Gustavus Adolphus landed on the German soil.

If ever the ruler of a nation is to be justified for going to war when his country is not actually invaded, it was doubtless Gustavus Adolphus. Had he withheld his aid, the probability is that all Germany would have succumbed to the Austrian emperor, and have been incorporated with his empire; and not only Germany, but Denmark and Sweden. The Protestant religion would have been suppressed in northern Germany, as it was in France by Louis XIV. There would have been no

Protestant country in Europe, but England, and perhaps Holland. A united German Empire, with the restoration of the Catholic religion, would have been a most dangerous power, — much more so than at the present day. Some there are, doubtless, who would condemn Gustavus for the invasion of Germany, and think he ought to have stayed at home and let his unfortunate neighbors take care of themselves the best way they could. Perhaps the peace societies would take this ground, and the apostles of thrift and material prosperity. But I confess, when I see a man like the King of Sweden, with all the temptations of luxury and ease encountering all sorts of perils and fatigues, — yea, offering up his life in battle in order to emancipate suffering humanity, — then every generous impulse and every dictate of enlightened reason urge me to add my praises with those of past generations in honor of such exalted heroism.

According to the authors of those times, signs and prodigies appeared, to warn mankind of the sanguinary struggle which was now to take place. "In the dead of night, on wild heaths, in solitary valleys, the clang of arms was heard. Armies were seen encountering each other in the heavens, marshalled by aërial leaders while monstrous births, mock suns, and showers of fire filled the minds of the superstitious with fear and dread. It would be puerile to believe these statements

yet if the stupendous framework of external nature ever could exhibit sympathy with the brief calamities of man, it may well be supposed to have been displayed when one of the fairest portions of the earth was again to be ravaged with fire and sword; and when the melancholy lesson, so often exemplified before, was to receive still further confirmation, — that of all the evils with which Divine wisdom permits this world to be visited, none can be compared to those which the wrath of man is so often eager to inflict upon his fellows."

I need not detail the various campaigns of the Swedish hero, his marchings and counter-marchings, his sieges and battles and victories, until the power of Austria was humbled and northern Germany was delivered. The history of all war is the same. There is no variety except to the eye of a military man. Military history is a dreary record of dangers, sufferings, mistakes, and crimes; occasionally it is relieved by brilliant feats of courage and genius, which create enthusiastic admiration, but generally it is monotonous. It has but little interest except to contemporaries. Who now reads the details of our last great war? Who has not almost forgotten the names of its ordinary generals? How sickening the description of the Crusades! The mind cannot dwell on the conflagrations, the massacres, the starvations, the desolations, of an invaded country

Few even read a description of the famous battles of the world, which decided the fate of nations. When battles and marches are actually taking place, and all is uncertainty, then there is a vivid curiosity to learn immediate results; but when wars are ended, we forget the intense excitements which we may have felt when they were taking place. We gaze with eager interest on a game of football, but when it is ended we care but little for the victors. It is only when the remote consequences of great wars are traced by philosophical historians, revealing the ways of Providence, retribution, and eternal justice, that interest is enkindled. No book to me is more dreary and uninteresting than the campaigns of Frederic II., though painted by the hand of one of the greatest masters of modern times. Even interest in the details of the battles of Napoleon is absorbed in the interest we feel in the man, — how he was driven hither and thither by the Providence he ignored, and made to point a moral to an immortal tale. All we care about the histories of wars is the general results, and the principles to be deduced as they bear on the cause of civilization.

It was fortunate for the fame and the cause of Gustavus that at the very outset of his career, when he landed in Pomerania, with his small army of twenty thousand men, the Emperor had been prevailed upon by a pressure he could not resist, and the intrigues of

all the German princes, to dispense with the services of Wallenstein. Spain, France, Bavaria, — the whole Electoral College, Catholic as well as Protestant, — clamored for the discharge of the most unscrupulous general of modern times. He was detested and feared by everybody. Humanity shed tears over his exactions and cruelties, while general fears were aroused that his influence was dangerous to the public peace. Most people supposed that the war was virtually ended, and that he was therefore no longer needed.

Loath was Ferdinand to part with the man to whom he was indebted for the establishment of his throne; and it seems he was also personally attached to him. Long did he resist expostulations and threats. He felt as poor Ganganelli felt when called upon by the Bourbon courts of Europe to annul the charter of the Jesuits. Wallenstein would probably have been retained by Ferdinand, had this been possible; but the Emperor was forced to yield to overwhelming importunities. So the dismissal of the general was decreed at the diet of Worms, and a messenger of the Emperor delivered to the haughty victor the decree of his sovereign.

Wallenstein was then at the head of one hundred thousand men. Would he obey the order? Would he retire to private life? Ambitious and unscrupulous as he was, he knew that no one, however powerful, could resist an authority universally conceded

to be supreme and legitimate. It was like the recall of a proconsul by the Roman Emperor and Senate: he could resist for a time, but resistance meant ultimate ruin. He also knew that he would be recalled, for he was necessary to the Emperor. He anticipated the successes of Gustavus. He was not prepared to be a traitor. He would wait his time.

So he resigned his command without a moment's hesitation, and with apparent cheerfulness. He even loaded the messenger with costly gifts. He appeared happy to be relieved from labor and responsibility, and retired at once to his vast Bohemian estates to pursue his favorite studies in the science of the stars, to enshroud himself in mystery and gloom, and dazzle his countrymen by the splendor of his life. "His table was never furnished with less than one hundred covers; none but a noble of ancient family was intrusted with the office of superintending his household; an armed guard of fifty men waited in his antechamber; the ramparts of his castle were lined with sentinels; six barons and as many knights constantly attended on his person; sixty pages were trained and supported in his palace, which was decorated with all the wonders of art, and almost realized the fictions of Eastern luxury." In this splendid retirement Wallenstein brooded on his wrongs, and waited for the future.

The dismissal of this able general was a great mis-

take on the part of the Emperor. There were left no generals capable of opposing Gustavus. The supreme command had devolved on Tilly, able but bigoted, and best known for his remorseless cruelty when Magdeburg was taken by assault, — the direst tragedy of the war. This city was one of the first to welcome the invasion of the King of Sweden, and also to adopt the Protestant religion. It was the most prosperous city in northern Germany; one of the richest and most populous. Against this mercantile fortress Tilly directed all his energies, for he detested the spirit of its people. It was closely invested by the imperial troops, and fell before Gustavus could advance to relieve it. It was neglected by the electors of Saxony and Brandenburg, who were timid and pusillanimous, and it was lulled into false security by its strong position and defences. Not sufficient preparation for defence had been made by the citizens, who trusted to its strong walls, and knew that Gustavus was advancing to relieve it. But unexpectedly it was assaulted in the most daring and desperate manner, and all was lost. On a Sabbath morning, the sudden toll of alarm bells, the roar of artillery, the roll of drums beating to quarter, and the piercing cries of women and children, mingled with the shouts and execrations of brutal and victorious soldiers, announced the fate of Magdeburg. Forty thousand people — men, women, and children — were inhumanly

butchered, without necessity, quarter, compassion, or remorse. So cold and hard is war! This was the saddest massacre in the history of Germany, and one of the greatest crimes that a successful general ever committed. History has no language, and painting no colors to depict the horrors of that dreadful scene; and the interval of more than two hundred years has not weakened the impression of its horrors. The sack of Magdeburg stands out in the annals of war like the siege of Tyre and the fall of Jerusalem.

But it roused the Protestants as from a trance. It united them, as the massacre of St. Bartholomew united the Huguenots. They marched under the standard of Gustavus with the same enthusiasm that the Huguenots showed under Henry IV. at the battle of Ivry. There was now no limit to the successes of the heroic Swede. The decisive battle of Leipsic, the passage of the Lech, the defence of Nuremberg, and the great final victory at Lutzen raised the military fame of Gustavus to a height unknown since Hannibal led his armies over the Alps, or Cæsar encountered the patrician hosts at the battle of Pharsalia. No victories were ever more brilliant than his; and they not only gave him a deathless fame, but broke forever the Austrian fetters. His reputation as a general was fairly earned. He ranks with Condé, Henry IV., Frederic the Great, Marlborough, and Wellington; not, perhaps, with Alexander.

Cæsar, and Napoleon, — those phenomena of military genius, the exalted trio who shine amid the glories of the battlefield, as Homer, Dante, and Shakspeare loom up in fame above other immortal poets.

In two years from the landing of Gustavus Adolphus on the island of Ruden, near the southern extremity of the Baltic, he expelled a triumphant enemy from Pomerania, traversed the banks of the Oder, overran the Duchy of Mecklenburg, ascended the Elbe, delivered Saxony from the armies of Tilly, crossed the Thuringian forest, entered Frankfort in triumph, restored the Palatinate to its lawful sovereign, took possession of some of the strongest fortresses on the Rhine, overran Bavaria, occupied its capital, crossed the Danube, and then returned to Saxony, to offer up his life on the plains of Lutzen. There, on that memorable battlefield, where the descending sun of victory in later times shed a delusive gleam on the eagles of Napoleon before his irremediable ruin, did Gustavus encounter the great antagonist of German liberties, whom the necessities of the Emperor had summoned from retirement. Wallenstein once more commanded the imperial armies, but only on conditions which made him virtually independent of his master. He was generalissimo, with almost unlimited authority, so long as the war should last; and the Emperor agreed to remove neither the general himself nor his officers, and gave

him principalities and spoils indefinitely. He was the most powerful subject in Europe, and the greatest general next to Gustavus. I read of no French or English general who has been armed with such authority. Cromwell and Napoleon took it; it was not conferred by legitimate and supreme power. Had Wallenstein been successful to the end, he might have grasped the imperial sceptre. Had Gustavus lived, he might have been the dictator of Germany.

Impatient were both commanders to engage in the contest which each knew would be decisive. Long did they wait for opportunities. At last, on the 16th of November, 1632, the defenders and the foes of German liberties arrayed themselves for the great final encounter. The Protestants gained the day, but Gustavus fell, exclaiming to the murderous soldiers who demanded his name and quality, "I am the King of Sweden! And I seal this day, with my blood, the liberties and religion of the German nation."

The death of Gustavus Adolphus in the hour of victory was a shock which came upon the allies like the loss of the dearest friend. The victory seemed too dearly purchased. The greatest protector which Protestantism ever knew had perished, as he himself predicted. Pappenheim, the bravest of the Austrian generals, also perished; and with him, the flower of Wallenstein's army. Schiller thinks that Gustavus

died fortunately for his fame; that had he survived the decisive battle of Lutzen, he not only could have dictated terms to the Emperor, but might have yielded to the almost irresistible temptation of giving laws to the countries he had emancipated. But he did not live to be tried. That rarest of all trials was reserved alone for our Washington to pass through triumphantly, — to set an example to all countries and ages of the superiority of moral to intellectual excellence. Gustavus might have triumphed like Washington, and he might have yielded like Cromwell. We do not know. This only we know, — that he was not merely the great hero of the Thirty Years' War, but one of the best men who ever wore a crown; that he conferred on the Protestants and on civilization an immortal and inestimable service, and that he is to be regarded as one of the great benefactors of the world.

The Thirty Years' War loses its dramatic interest after the battle of Lutzen. The final issue was settled, although the war was carried on sixteen years longer. It was not till 1648 that the peace of Westphalia was signed, which guaranteed the liberties of Germany, and established the balance of power. That famous treaty has also been made the foundation of all subsequent treaties between the European nations, and created an era in modern history. It took place after the death of Richelieu, when Mazarin ruled France in

the name of Louis XIV., and when Charles I. was in the hands of Cromwell.

With the death of Gustavus we also partially lose sight of Wallenstein. He never afterwards gained victories commensurate with his reputation. He remained, after the battle of Lutzen, unaccountably inactive in Bohemia. But if his military fame was tarnished, his pride and power remained. His military exactions became unendurable, and it is probable he was a traitor. So unpopular did he become, and so suspicious was the Emperor, who lost confidence in him, that he was assassinated by the order of his sovereign. He was too formidable to be removed in any other way. He probably deserved his fate. Although it was difficult to bring this great culprit to justice, yet his death is a lesson to traitors. "There are many ways," said Cicero, "in which a man may die," — referring to the august usurper of the Roman world.

I will not dwell on the sixteen remaining years of the Thirty Years' War. It is too horrible a picture to paint. The desolation and misery which overwhelmed Germany were most frightful and revolting. The war was carried on without system or genius. "Expeditions were undertaken apparently with no other view than to desolate hostile provinces, till in the end provisions and winter quarters formed the principal object of the summer campaigns." "Disease, famine, and want of

discipline swept away whole armies before they had seen an enemy." Soldiers deserted the ranks, and became roving banditti. Law and justice entirely vanished from the land. Germany, it is asserted by Mitchell, lost probably twelve millions of people. Before the war, the population was sixteen millions; at the close of the war, it had dwindled to four millions. The city of Augsburg at one time had eighty thousand inhabitants; at the close of the war, it had only eighteen thousand. "No less than thirty thousand villages and hamlets were destroyed. Peaceful peasants were hunted for mere sport, like the beasts of the forest. Citizens were nailed up and fired at like targets. Women were collected into bands, driven like slaves into camp, and exposed to indignities worse than death. The fields were allowed to run waste, and forests sprung up and covered entire districts which before the war had been under full cultivation." Amid these scenes of misery and ruin, vices were more marked than calamities. They were carried to the utmost pitch of vulgarity. Both Austrian and Swedish generals were often so much intoxicated, for days together, as to be incapable of service. Never was a war attended by so many horrors. Never was crime more general and disgusting. So terrible were the desolations, that it took Germany one hundred years to recover from her losses. It never recovered the morality and religion

which existed in the time of Luther. That war retarded civilization in all the countries where it raged. It was a moral and physical conflagration.

But there is a God in this world, and the evils were overruled. It is certain that Protestantism was rescued from extermination on the continent of Europe. It is clear also that a barrier was erected against the aggressions of Austria. The Catholic and the Protestant religions were left unmolested in the countries where they prevailed, and all religious sects were tolerated. Religious toleration, since the Thirty Years' War, has been the boast and glory of Germany.

We should feel a sickening melancholy if something for the ultimate good of the world were not to come from such disasters as filled Germany with grief and indignation for a whole generation; for the immediate effects of the Thirty Years' War were more disastrous than those of any war I have read of in the history of Europe since the fall of the Roman Empire. In the civil wars of France and England, cities and villages were generally spared. Civilization in those countries has scarcely ever been retarded for more than a generation; but it was put back in Germany for a century. Yet the enormous sacrifice of life and property would seem to show the high value which Providence places on the great rights of mankind, in comparison with material prosperity or the lives of men. What is

spiritual is permanent; what is material is transient. The early history of Christianity is the history of martyrdom. Five millions of Crusaders perished, that Europe might learn liberality of mind. It took one hundred years of contention and two revolutions to secure religious toleration in England. France passed through awful political hurricanes, in order that feudal injustice might be removed. In like manner, twelve millions of people perished in Germany, that despotism might be rebuked.

Fain would we believe that what little was gained proved a savor of life unto life; that seeds of progress were planted in that unhappy country which after a lapse of one hundred years would germinate and develop a higher civilization. What a great Protestant power has arisen in northern Germany to awe and keep in check not Catholicism merely, but such a hyperborean giant as Russia in its daring encroachments. But for Prussia, Russia might have extended her conquests to the south as well as to the west. But for the Thirty Years' War, no such empire as Prussia would have been probable, or perhaps possible. But for that dreadful contest, there might have been to-day only the Catholic religion among the descendants of the Teutonic barbarians on the continent of Europe. But for that war, the Austrian Empire might have retained a political ascendency in

Europe until the French Revolution; and such countries as Sweden and Denmark might have been absorbed in it, as well as Saxony, Brandenburg, and Hanover. What a terrible thing for Germany would have been the unbroken and iron despotism of Austria, extending its Briarean arms into every corner of Europe where the German language is spoken! What a blow such a despotism would have been to science, literature, and philosophy! Would Catholic Austria, supreme in Germany, have established schools, or rewarded literary men? The Jesuits would have flourished and triumphed from Pomerania to Wallachia; from the Baltic to the Danube.

It may have taken one hundred years for Germany to rally after such miseries and disasters as I have had time only to allude to, and not fully to describe; but see how gloriously that country has at last arisen above all misfortunes! Why may we not predict a noble future for so brave and honest a people,—the true descendants of those Teutonic conquerers to whom God gave, nearly two thousand years ago, the possessions and the lands of the ancient races who had not what the Germans had,—a soul; the soul which hopes, and the soul which conquers? The Thirty Years' War proved that liberty is not a dream, nor truth a defeated power. Liberty cannot be extinguished among such peoples, though "oceans may overwhelm it and

mountains may press it down." It is the boon of one hundred generations, the water of life distilled from the tears of unnumbered millions, — the precious legacy of heroes and martyrs, who in different nations and in different ages, inspired by the contemplation of its sublime reality, counted not their lives dear unto them, if by the sacrifice of life this priceless blessing could be transmitted to posterity.

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PUBLISHER'S NOTE

Dr. Lord died in December, 1894. Neither he nor the rest of the world could imagine the revolution in thought, conscience and sentiment that a generation of evil training would accomplish in the German people whom he so praises here.

Dr. Newell Dwight Hillis, in a book on "German Atrocities" (during the world war of 1914–18), says: "All that Germany won in three hundred years through the teachings of Martin Luther has been lost in twenty-five years through the influence of the Kaiser and his militarists. . . . This

new philosophy of militarism teaches that crimes become virtues if they promote the interests of the Fatherland. In the presence of all the world we have seen Germany lose her soul."

It began with the Prussian Chancellor Bismarck, who induced Austria to help rob Denmark of Schleswig-Holstein (1864); quarreled with Austria and humiliated her with defeat (1866); fell upon unprepared France (1870), seizing Alsace-Lorraine and a billion dollars of "indemnity"; set up a German Empire (1871) with his Prussian king as Kaiser; and then settled down to digest the plunder, and in peace to organize Germany with Prussian military efficiency in material development. The world admired the splendid success, followed up by the younger Kaiser (1888) whose ambition soon dreamed of — first, European, then world-wide — German supremacy.

The Pan-German theory of replacing conscience by the needs of the State, was zealously propagated by the military men and soon by the universities, publicists, financiers, manufacturers, shippers, State clergy and school-teachers. The Kaiser, about 1911, proclaimed the value of war and its loot as prime investment — while assuming the credit for keeping the peace. The people gradually came to believe it all, and longed for "The Day."

Thus did Germany "lose her soul," and by the war she prepared for, provoked, entered into with violating sacred treaties, and pursued with the breaking of every law human and divine, she won defeat and the detestation of the world she sought to dominate.

Would that Dr. Lord were still here, with his scorn of evil, to record this failure of a fair promise under the temptation of power and plunder!

CARDINAL DE RICHELIEU.

A. D. 1585–1642.

ABSOLUTISM.

CARDINAL DE RICHELIEU.

ABSOLUTISM

CARDINAL DE RICHELIEU is an illustration of what can be done for the prosperity and elevation of a country by a man whom we personally abhor, and whose character is stained by glaring defects and vices. If there was a statesman in French history who was pre-eminently unscrupulous, selfish, tyrannical, and cruel, that statesman was the able and wily priest who ruled France during the latter years of Louis XIII. And yet it would be difficult to find a ruler who has rendered more signal services to the state or to the monarch whom he served. He extricated France from the perils of anarchy, and laid the foundation for the grandeur of the monarchy under Louis XIV. It was his mission to create a strong government, when only a strong government could save the kingdom from disintegration; so that absolutism, much as we detest it, seems to have been one of the needed forces of the seventeenth century

It was needed in France, to restrain the rapacity and curtail the overgrown power of feudal nobles, whose cabals and treasons were fatal to the interests of law and order.

The assassination of Henry IV. was a great calamity. The government fell into the hands of his widow, Marie de Médicis, a weak and frivolous woman. Under her regency all kinds of evils accumulated. So many conflicting interests and animosities existed that there was little short of anarchy. There were not popular insurrections and rebellions, for the people were ignorant, and were in bondage to their feudal masters; but the kingdom was rent by the rivalries and intrigues of the great nobles, who, no longer living in their isolated castles but in the precincts of the court, fought duels in the streets, plundered the royal treasury, robbed jewellers and coachmakers, paid no debts, and treated the people as if they were dogs or cattle. They claimed all the great offices of state, and all high commands in the army and navy; sold justice, tampered with the law, quarrelled with the parliaments, — indeed, were a turbulent, haughty, and powerful aristocracy, who felt that they were above all law and all restraint. They were not only engaged in perpetual intrigues, but even in treasonable correspondence with the enemies of their country. They disregarded the honor of the kingdom, and attempted to divide it into

principalities for their children. "The Guises wished to establish themselves in Provence, the Montmorencies in Languedoc, the Longuevilles in Picardy. The Duke of Epernon sought to retain the sovereignty of Guienne, and the Duke of Vendôme to secure the sovereignty of Brittany." One wanted to be constable, another admiral, a third to be governor of a province, in order to tyrannize and enrich themselves like Roman proconsuls. Every outrage was shamelessly perpetrated by them with impunity, because they were too powerful to be punished. They assassinated their enemies filled the cities with their armed retainers, and made war even on the government; so that all central power was a mockery. The Queen-regent was humiliated and made contemptible, and was forced, in her turn and in self-defence, to intrigues and cabals, and sought protection by setting the nobles up against each other, and thus dividing their forces. Even the parliaments, which were courts of law, were full of antiquated prejudices, and sought only to secure their own privileges, — at one time siding with the Queen-regent, and then with the factious nobles. The Huguenots were the best people of the land; but they were troublesome, since they possessed cities and fortresses, and erected an *imperium in imperio*. In their synods and assemblies they usurped the attributes of secular rulers, and discussed questions of peace and war. They entered

into formidable conspiracies, and fomented the troubles and embarrassments of the government. The abjuration of Henry IV. had thinned their ranks and deprived them of court influence. No great leaders remained, since they had been seduced by fashion. The Huguenots were a disappointed and embittered party, hard to please, and hard to be governed; full of fierce resentments, and soured by old recollections. They had obtained religious liberty, but with this they were not contented. Their spirit was not unlike that of the Jacobins in England after the Stuarts were expelled from the throne. So all things combined to produce a state of anarchy and discontent. Feudalism had done its work. It was a good thing on the dissolution of the Roman Empire, when society was resolved into its original elements, — when barbarism on the one hand, and soul-fear on the other, made the Middle Ages funereal, dismal, violent, despairing. But commerce, arts, and literature had introduced a new era, — still unformed, a vast chaos of conflicting forces, and yet redeemed by reviving intelligence and restless daring. The one thing which society needed in that transition period was a strong government in the hands of kings, to restore law and develop national resources.

Now amid all these evils Richelieu grew up. Under the guise of levity and pleasure and good-nature, he

studied and comprehended all these parties and factions, and hated them all. All alike were hostile to the central power, which he saw was necessary to the preservation of law and to the development of the resources of the country.

Moreover, he was ambitious of power himself, which he loved as Michael Angelo loved art, and Palestrina loved music. Power was his master-passion, and consumed all other passions; and he resolved to gain it in any way he could, — unscrupulously, by flatteries, by duplicities, by sycophancies, by tricks, by lies, even by services. That was his end. He cared nothing for means. He was a politician.

The progress of his elevation is interesting, but hideous. Armand Jean Duplessis was born in 1585, of a noble family of high rank. He was designed for the army, but a bishopric falling to the gift of his family, he was made a priest. He early distinguished himself in his studies, for he was precocious and had great abilities. At twenty he was doctor of the Sorbonne, and before he was twenty-one he received from the Pope, Paul V., the emblems of spiritual power as a prelate of the Church. But he was too young to be made a bishop, according to the canons, — a difficulty, however, which he easily surmounted: he told a lie to the Pope, and then begged for an absolution. He then attached himself to the worthless favorite of the Queen-

regent, Concini, one of her countrymen; and through him to the Queen herself, Marie de Médicis, who told him her secrets, which he betrayed when it suited his interests. When Louis XIII. attained his majority, Richelieu paid his court to De Luynes, who was then all-powerful with the King, and who secured him a cardinal's hat; and when this miserable favorite died, — this falconer, this keeper of birds, yet duke, peer, governor, and minister, — Richelieu wound himself around the King, Louis XIII., the most impotent of all the Bourbons, made himself necessary, and became minister of foreign affairs; and his great rule began (1624).

During all these seventeen years of office-climbing, Richelieu was to all appearance the most amiable man in France; everybody liked him, and everybody trusted him. He was full of amenities, promises, bows, smiles, and flatteries. He always advocated the popular side with reigning favorites; courted all the great ladies; was seen in all the fashionable salons; had no offensive opinions; was polite to everybody; was non-committal; fond of games and spectacles; frivolous among fools, learned among scholars; grave among functionaries, devout among prelates; cunning as a fox, brave as a lion, supple as a dog; all things to all men; an Alcibiades, a schemer; with no apparent animosities; handsome, witty, brilliant;

preacher, courtier, student; as full of hypocrisy as an egg is of meat; with eyes wide open, and thoughts disguised; all eyes and no heart; reserved or communicative as it suited his purpose. This was that arch-intriguer who was seeking all the while, not the sceptre of the King, but the power of the King. Should you say that this non-committal, agreeable, and amiable politician — who quarrelled with nobody, and revealed nothing to anybody; who had cheated all parties by turns — was the man to save France, to extricate his country from all the evils to which I have alluded, to build up a great throne (even while he who sat upon it was utterly contemptible) and make that throne the first in Europe, and to establish absolutism as one of the needed forces of the seventeenth century?

Yet so it was; and his work was all the more difficult when the character of the King is considered. Louis XIII. was a different kind of man from his father Henry IV. and his grandson Louis XIV. He had no striking characteristics but feebleness and timidity and love of ignoble pleasures. He had no ambitions or powerful passions; was feeble and sickly from a child, — ruled at one time by his mother, and then by a falconer; and apparently taking but little interest in affairs of state.

But if it was difficult to gain ascendency over such a frivolous and inglorious Sardanapalus, it was easy to

retain it when this ascendency was once acquired. For Richelieu made him comprehend the dangers which menaced his life and his throne; that some very able man must be intrusted with supreme delegated power, who would rule for the benefit of him he served, — a servant, and yet a master; like Metternich in Austria, after the wars of Napoleon, — a man whose business and aim were to exalt absolutism on a throne. Moreover, he so complicated public affairs that his services were indispensable. Nobody could fill his place.

Also, it must be remembered that the King was isolated, and without counsellors whom he could trust. After the death of De Luynes he had no bosom friend. He was surrounded with perplexities and secret enemies. His mother, who had been regent, defied his authority; his brothers sought to wear his crown; the nobles conspired against his throne; the Protestants theatened another civil war; the parliaments thought only of retaining their privileges; the finances were disordered; the treasures which Henry IV. had accumulated had been squandered in bribing the great nobles; foreign enemies had invaded the soil of France; evils and dangers were accumulating on every side, with such terrific force as to jeopardize the very existence of the monarchy; and one necessity became apparent, even to the weak mind of the King, — that he must delegate

his power to some able man, who, though he might rule unscrupulously and tyrannically, would yet be faithful to the crown, and establish the central power for the benefit of his heirs and the welfare of the state.

Now Richelieu was just the man he needed, just such a man as the times required, — a man raised up to do important work, like Cromwell in England, like Bismarck in Prussia, like Cavour in Italy: doubtless a great hypocrite, yet sincere in the conviction that a strong government was the great necessity of his country; a great scoundrel, yet a patriotic and wise statesman, who loved his country with the ardor of a Mirabeau, while nobody loved him. Besides, he loved absolutism, both because he was by nature a tyrant, and because he was a member of the ecclesiastical hierarchy. He called to mind old Rome under the Cæsars, and mediæval Rome under the popes, and what a central authority had effected for civilization in times of anarchy, and in times of darkness and superstition; and the King to him was a sort of vicegerent of divine power, clothed in authority based on divine right, — the idea of kings in the Middle Ages. The state was his, to be managed as a man manages his farm, — as a South Carolinian once managed his slaves. The idea that political power properly emanates from the people, — the idea of Rousseau and

Jefferson, — never once occurred to him; nor even political power in the hands of aristocrats, fettered by a constitution and amenable to the nation. A constitutional monarchy existed nowhere, except perhaps in England. Unrestricted and absolute power in the hands of a king was the only government he believed in. The king might be feeble, in which case he could delegate his power to ministers; or he might be imbecile, in which case he might be virtually dethroned; but his royal rights were sacred, his authority incontestable, and consecrated by all usage and precedent.

Yet while Richelieu would uphold the authority of the crown as supreme and absolute, he would not destroy the prestige of the aristocracy; for he was a nobleman himself, — he belonged to their class. He believed in caste, in privileges, in monopolies; therefore he would not annul either rank or honor. The nobles were welcome to retain their stars and orders and ribbons and heraldic distinctions, even their parks and palaces and falcons and hounds. They were a favored class, that feudalism had introduced and ages had indorsed; but even they must be subservient to the crown, from which their honors emanated, and hence to order and law, of which the king was the keeper. They must be subjects of the government, as well as allies and supporters. The government was royal, not aristocratic. The privileges of the nobility were social rather than

political, although the great offices of state were intrusted to them as a favor, not as a right, — as simply servants of a royal master, whose interests they were required to defend. Some of them were allied by blood with the sovereign, and received marks of his special favor; but their authority was derived from him.

Richelieu was not unpatriotic. He wished to see France powerful, united, and prosperous; but powerful as a monarchy, united under a king, and prosperous for the benefit of the privileged orders, — not for the plebeian people, who toiled for supercilious masters. The people were of no account politically; were as unimportant as slaves, — to be protected in life and property, that they might thrive for the benefit of those who ruled them.

So when Richelieu became prime minister, and felt secure in his seat, — knowing how necessary to the King his services were, — he laid aside his amiable manners as a politician, and determined as a statesman to carry out remorselessly and rigidly his plans for the exaltation of the monarchy. And the moment he spoke at the council-board his genius predominated; all saw that a great power had arisen, that he was a master, and would be obeyed, and would execute his plans with no sentimentalities, but coldly, fixedly, like a man of blood and iron, indifferent to all obstacles He was a man who could rule, and therefore,

on Carlyle's theory, a man who ought to rule, because he was strong.

There is something imposing, I grant, in this executive strength; it does not make a man interesting, but it makes him feared. Every ruler, — in fact every man intrusted with executive power, especially in stormy times, — should be resolute, unflinching, with a will dominating over everything, with courage, pluck, backbone, be he king or prime minister, or the superintendent of a railway, or director of a lunatic asylum, or president of a college. No matter whether the sphere be large or small, the administration of power requires energy, will, promptness of action, without favor and without fear. And if such a person rules well he will be respected; but if he rules unwisely, — if capricious, unjust, cruel, vindictive, — he may be borne for a while, until patience is exhausted and indignation becomes terrible: a passion of vengeance, like that which overthrew Strafford. Wise tyrants, like Peter and Frederic the Great, will be endured, from their devotion to public interests; but unwise tyrants, ruling for self-interest or pleasure, will be hurled from power, or assassinated like Nero or Commodus, as the only way to get rid of the miseries they inflict.

Now of the class of wise and enlightened tyrants was Richelieu. His greatness was in his will, sagacity, watchfulness, and devotion to public affairs. Factions

could not oust him, because he was strong; the King would not part with him, because he was faithful; posterity will not curse him, because he laid the foundation of the political greatness of his country.

I do not praise his system of government. On abstract principles I feel that it is against the liberties of mankind; nor is it in accordance with the progress of government in our modern times. All the successive changes which reforms and revolutions have wrought have been towards representative and constitutional governments, — as in England and France in the nineteenth century. Absolutism or Cæsarism is only adapted to people in primitive or anarchical states of society, — as in old Rome, or Rome under the popes. It is at the best a necessary tyranny, made so by the disorders and evils of life. It can be commended only when men are worse than governments; when they are to be coerced like wild beasts, or lunatics, or scoundrels. When there is universal plunder, lying, cheating, and murdering; when laws are a mockery, and when demagogues reign; when all public interests are scandalously sacrificed for private emolument, — then absolutism may for a time be necessary; but only for a time, unless we assume that men can never govern themselves.

In that state of society into which France was plunged during the regency of Marie de Médicis, and

at which I have glanced, absolutism was perhaps a needed force. Then Richelieu, its great modern representative, arose, — a model statesman in the eyes of Peter the Great.

But he was not to reign, and trample all other powers beneath his feet, without a memorable struggle. Three great forces were arrayed against him. These were the Huguenots, the nobles, and the parliaments, — the Protestant, the feudal, and the legal elements of society in France. The people, — at least the peasantry, — did not rise up against him; they were powerless and too unenlightened. The priests sustained him, and the common people acquiesced in his rigid rule, for he established law and order.

He began his labors in behalf of absolutism by suppressing the Huguenots. That was the only political party which was urgent for its rights. They were an intelligent party of tradesmen and small farmers; they were plebeian, but conscientious and aspiring. They were not contented alone to worship God according to the charter which Henry IV. had granted, but they sought political power; and they were so unfortunate as to be guilty of cabals and intrigues inconsistent with a central power. They were factious, and were not disposed to submit to legitimate authority. They had declined in numbers and influence; they had even degenerated in religious life: but they were still

powerful and dangerous foes. They had retreated to their strong fortress of La Rochelle, resolved, if attacked, to fight once again the whole power of the monarchy. They put themselves in a false position; they wanted more than the Edict of Nantes had guaranteed.

Unfortunately for them they had no leaders worthy to marshal their forces. Fashion and the influence of the court had seduced their men of rank; nor had they the enthusiasm which had secured victory at Ivry. Nor could they contend openly in the field; they were obliged to intrench themselves in an impregnable fortress: there they deemed they could defy their enemy. They even invoked the aid of England, and thus introduced foreign enemies on the soil of France, which was high-treason. They put themselves in the attitude of rebels against the government; and so long as English ships, with supplies, could go in and out of their harbor, they could not be conquered. Richelieu, clad in mail, a warrior-priest, surveyed with disgust their strong defences and their open harbor. His artillery was of no use, nor his lines of circumvallation. So he put his brain in motion, and studied Quintus Curtius. He remembered what Alexander did at the siege of Tyre; he constructed a vast dyke of stone and timber and iron across the harbor, in some places twelve hundred feet deep, and thus cut off all egress

and ingress. The English under Buckingham departed, unable to render further assistance. The capture then was only a work of time; genius had hemmed the city in, and famine soon did the rest. Cats, dogs, and vermin became luxuries. The starving women beseeched the inexorable enemy for permission to retire: they remembered the mercy that Henry IV. had shown at the siege of Paris. But war in the hands of masters has no favors to grant; conquerors have no tears. The Huguenots, as rebels, had no hope but in unconditional submission. They yielded it reluctantly, but not until famine had done its work. And they never raised their heads again; their spirit was broken. They were conquered, and at the mercy of the crown; destined in the next reign to be cruelly and most wantonly persecuted; hunted as heretics by dragonnades and executioners, at the bidding of Louis XIV., until four hundred thousand were executed or driven from the kingdom.

But Richelieu was not such a bigot as Louis XIV.; he was a statesman, and took enlightened views of the welfare of the country. Therefore he contented himself with destroying the fortifications of La Rochelle, filling up its ditches, and changing its government. He continued, in a modified form, the religious privileges conceded by the Edict of Nantes; but he kept a strict watch, humiliated the body by withholding civil

equalities and offices in the army and navy, treating with disdain their ministers, and taking away their social rank, so that they became plebeian and unimportant. He pursued the same course that the English government adopted in reference to Dissenters in the eighteenth century, when they were excluded from Oxford and Cambridge and church burial-grounds. So that Protestantism in France, after the fall of La Rochelle, never asserted its dignity, in spite of Bibles, consistories, and schools. Degraded at court, deprived of the great offices of the state, despised, rejected, and persecuted, it languished and declined.

Having subdued the Huguenots, Richelieu turned his attention to the nobles,— the most worthless, arrogant, and powerful of all the nobility of Europe; men who made royalty a mockery and law a name. I have alluded to their intrigues, ambition, and insolence. It was necessary that they should be humiliated, decimated, and punished, if central power was to be respected. So he cut off their towering heads, exiled and imprisoned them whenever they violated the laws, or threatened the security of the throne or the peace of the realm. As individuals they hated him, and conspired against his rule. Had they combined, they would have been more powerful than he; but they were too quarrelsome, envious, and short-sighted to combine.

The person who hated Richelieu most fiercely and bitterly was the Queen-mother, — widow of Henry IV., regent during the minority of Louis XIII. And no wonder, for he had cheated her and betrayed her. She was a very formidable enemy, having a great ascendency over the mind of her son the King; and once, it is said, she had so powerfully wrought upon him by her envenomed sarcasms, in the palace of the Luxembourg where she lived in royal state, that the King had actually taken the parchment in his hand to sign the disgrace of his minister. But he was watched by an eye that never slept; Richelieu suddenly appearing, at the critical moment, from behind tapestries where he had concealed himself, confronted and defied his enemy. The King bewildered, had not nerve enough to face his own servant, who however made him comprehend the dangers which surrounded his throne and person, and compelled him to part with his mother, — the only woman he ever loved, — and without permitting her to imprint upon his brow her own last farewell. "And the world saw the extraordinary spectacle of this once powerful Queen, the mother of a long line of kings, compelled to lead a fugitive life from court to court, — repulsed from England by her son-in-law, refused a shelter in Holland, insulted by Spain, neglected by Rome, and finally obliged to crave an asylum from Rubens the painter.

and, driven from one of his houses, forced to hide herself in Cologne, where, deserted by all her children, and so reduced by poverty as to break up the very furniture of her room for fuel, she perished miserably between four empty walls, on a wretched bed, destitute, helpless, heartbroken, and alone." Such was the power and such was the vengeance of the cardinal on the highest personage in France. Such was the dictation of a priest to a king who personally disliked him; such was his ascendency, not by Druidical weapons, but by genius presenting reasons of state.

The next most powerful personage in France was the Duke of Orleans, brother of the King, who sought to steal his sceptre. As he was detected in treasonable correspondence with Spain, he became a culprit, but was spared after making a humiliating confession and submission. But Condé, the first prince of the blood, was shut up in prison, and the powerful Duke of Guise was exiled. Richelieu took away from the Duke of Bouillon his sovereignty of Sedan; forced the proud Epernon to ask pardon on his knees; drove away from the kingdom the Duke of Vendôme, natural brother of the King; executed the Duke of Montmorency, whose family traced an unbroken lineage to Pharamond; confined Marshal Bassompierre to the Bastile; arrested Marshal Marillac at the head of a conquering army; cut off the head of Cinq-Mars, grand equerry and

favorite of the King; and executed on the scaffold the Counts of Chalais and Bouteville. All these men were among the proudest and most powerful nobles in Europe; they all lived like princes, and had princely revenues and grand offices, but had been caught with arms in their hands, or in treasonable correspondence. What hope for ordinary culprits when the proudest feudal nobles were executed or exiled, like common malefactors? Neither rank nor services could screen them from punishment. The great minister had no mercy and no delay even for the favorites of royalty. Nay, the King himself became his puppet, and was forced to part with his friends, his family, his mistresses, and his pleasures. Some of the prime ministers of kings have had as much power as Richelieu, but no minister, before or since, has ruled the monarch himself with such an iron sway. How weak the King, or how great the minister!

The third great force which Richelieu crushed was the parliament of Paris. It had the privilege of registering the decrees of the King; and hence was a check, the only check, on royal authority, — unless the King came in person into the assembly, and enforced his decree by what was called a "bed of justice." This body, however, was judicial rather than legislative; made up of pedantic and aristocratic lawyers, who could be troublesome. We get some idea of the humiliation

of this assembly of lawyers and nobles from the speech of Omer Talon, — the greatest lawyer of the realm, — when called upon to express the sentiments of his illustrious body to the King, at a "bed of justice": "Happy should we be, most gracious sovereign, if we could obtain any favor worthy of the honor which we derive from your majesty's presence; but the entry of your sacred person into our assembly unfits us for our functions. And inasmuch as the throne on which you are seated is a light that dazzles us, bow, if it please you, the heavens which you inhabit, and after the example of the Eternal Sovereign, whose image you bear, condescend to visit us with your gracious mercy."

What a contrast to this servile speech was the conduct of the English parliament about this time, in its memorable resistance to Charles I.; and how different would have been the political destinies of the English people, if Strafford, just such a man as Richelieu, had succeeded in his schemes! But in England the parliament was backed by the nation. — at least by the middle classes. In France the people had then no political aspirations; among them a Cromwell could not have arisen, since a Cromwell could not have been sustained.

Thus Richelieu, by will and genius, conquered all his foes in order to uphold the throne, and thus elevate the nation; for, as Sir James Stephen says, "the grandeur

of the monarchy and the welfare of France with him were but convertible terms." He made the throne the first in Europe, even while he who sat upon it was personally contemptible. He gave lustre to the monarchy, while he himself was an unarmed priest. It was a splendid fiction to make the King nominally so powerful, while really he was so feeble But royalty was not a fiction under his successor. How respectable did Richelieu make the monarchy! What a deep foundation did he lay for royalty under Louis XIV.! What a magnificent inheritance did he bequeath to that monarch! "Nothing was done for forty years which he had not foreseen and prepared. His successor, Mazarin, only prospered so far as he followed out his instructions; and the star of Louis XIV. did not pale so long as the policy which Richelieu bequeathed was the rule of his public acts." The magnificence of Louis was only the sequel of the energy and genius of Richelieu; Versailles was really the gift of him who built the Palais Royal.

The services of Richelieu to France did not end with centralizing power around the throne. He enlarged the limits of the kingdom and subdued her foreign enemies. Great rivers and mountains became the national boundaries, within which it was easy to preserve conquests. He was not ambitious of foreign domination; he simply wished to make the kingdom impregnable. Had

Napoleon pursued this policy, he could never have been overthrown, and his dynasty would have been established. It was the policy of Elizabeth and of Cromwell. I do not say that Richelieu did not enter upon foreign wars; but it was to restore the "balance of power," not to add kingdoms to the empire. He rendered assistance to Gustavus Adolphus, in spite of the protests of Rome and the disgust of Catholic powers, in order to prevent the dangerous ascendency of Austria; thus setting an example for William III., and Pitt himself, in his warfare against Napoleon. In these days we should prefer to see the "balance of power" maintained by a congress of nations, rather than by vast military preparations and standing armies, which eat out the resources of nations; but in the seventeenth century there was no other way to maintain this balance than by opposing armies. Nor did Richelieu seek to maintain the peace of Europe by force alone. Never was there a more astute and profound diplomatist. His emissaries were in every court, with intrigues very hard to be baffled. He equalled Metternich or Talleyrand in his profound dissimulation, for European diplomacy has ever been based on this. While he built up absolutism in France, he did not alienate other governments: so that, like Cromwell, he made his nation respected abroad. His conquest of Roussillon prepared the way for the famous Treaty of the Pyrenees, under the

administration of Mazarin. While vigorous in war, his policy was on the whole pacific, — like that of all Catholic priests who have held power in France. He loved glory indeed, but, like Sully and Colbert, he also wished to develop the national resources; and, as indeed all enlightened statesmen from Moses downward have sought to do, he wished to make the country strong for defence rather than offence.

He showed great sagacity as well as an enlightened mind. The ablest men were placed in office. The army and navy were reorganized. Corruption and peculation on the part of officials were severely punished. The royal revenue was increased. Roads, bridges, canals were built and repaired, and public improvements were made. The fine arts were encouraged, and even learning was rewarded. It was he who founded the French Academy, — although he excluded from it men of original genius whose views he did not like. Law and order were certainly restored, and anarchy ceased to reign. The rights of property were established, and the finances freed from embarrassments.

So his rigid rule tended to the elevation of France; absolutism proved necessary in his day, and under his circumstances. When arraigned at the bar of posterity, he claims, like Napoleon, to be judged for his services, and not for his defects of character. These defects will forever make him odious in spite of his services. I

hardly know a more repulsive benefactor. He was vain, cold, heartless, rigid, and proud. He had no amiable weakness. His smile was a dagger, and his friendship was a snare. He was a hypocrite and a tyrant. He had no pity on a fallen foe; and even when bending under the infirmities of age, and in the near prospect of death, his inexorable temper was never for a moment subdued. The execution of Cinq-Mars and De Thou took place when he had one foot in his grave. He deceived everybody, sent his spies into the bosom of families, and made expediency the law of his public life.

But it is nothing to the philosophic student of history that he built the Palais Royal, or squandered riches with Roman prodigality, or rewarded players, or enriched Marion Delorme, or clad himself in mail before La Rochelle, or persecuted his early friends, or robbed the monasteries, or made a spy of Father Joseph, or exiled the Queen-mother, or kept the King in bondage, or sent his enemies to the scaffold: these things are all against him, and make him appear in a repulsive light. But if he brought order out of confusion, and gave a blow to feudalism, and destroyed anarchies, and promoted law, and developed the resources of his country, making that country formidable and honorable, and constructed a vast machinery of government by which France was kept together for a century, and

would have fallen to pieces without it,—then there is another way to survey this bad man; and we view him not only as a great statesman and ruler, but as an instrument of Providence, raised up as a terror to evil-doers. We may hate absolutism, but must at the same time remember that there are no settled principles of government, any more than of political economy. That is the best government which is best adapted to the exigency of that human society which at the time it serves. Republicanism would not do in China, any more than despotism in New England. Bad men, somehow or other, must be coerced and punished. The more prevalent is depravity, so much the more necessary is despotic vigor: it will be so to the end of time. It is all nonsense to dream of liberty with a substratum of folly and vice. Unless evils can be remedied by the public itself, giving power to the laws which the people create, then physical force, hard and cold tyranny, must inevitably take the place. No country will long endure anarchy; and then the hardest characters may prove the greatest benefactors.

It is on this principle that I am reconciled to the occasional rule of despots. And when I see a bad man, like Richelieu, grasping power to be used for the good of a nation, I have faith to believe it to be ordered wisely. When men are good and honest and brave, we shall have Washingtons; when they are selfish

and lawless, God will send Richelieus and Napoleons, if He has good things in store for the future, even as He sends Neros and Diocletians when a nation is doomed to destruction by incurable rottenness.

And yet absolutism in itself is not to be defended; it is what enlightened nations are now striving to abolish. It is needed only under certain circumstances; if it were to be perpetuated in any nation it would be Satanic. It is endurable only because it may be destroyed when it has answered its end; and, like all human institutions, it will become corrupted. It was shamefully abused under Louis XIV. and Louis XV. But when corrupted and abused it has, like slavery, all the elements of certain decay and ruin. The abuse of power will lead to its own destruction, even as undue haste in the acquisition of riches tendeth to poverty.

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OLIVER CROMWELL.

A. D. 1599–1658.

ENGLISH REVOLUTION.

A. D. 1520–1526.

OLIVER CROMWELL.

ENGLISH REVOLUTION.

THE most difficult character in history to treat critically, and the easiest to treat rhetorically, perhaps, is Oliver Cromwell; after two centuries and more he is still a puzzle: his name, like that of Napoleon, is a doubt. Some regard him with unmingled admiration; some detest him as a usurper; and many look upon him as a hypocrite. Nobody questions his ability; and his talents were so great that some bow down to him on that account, out of reverence for strength, like Carlyle. On the whole he is a popular idol, not for his strength, but for his cause, since he represents the progressive party in his day in behalf of liberty, — at least until his protectorate began. Then new issues arose; and while he appeared as a great patriot and enlightened ruler, he yet reigned as an absolute monarch, basing his power on a standing army.

But whatever may be said of Cromwell as statesman.

general, or ruler, his career was remarkable and exceedingly interesting. His character, too, was unique and original; hence we are never weary of discussing him. In studying his character and career, we also have our minds directed to the great ideas of his tumultuous and agitated age, for he, like Napoleon, was the product of revolution. He was the offspring of mighty ideas,— he did not create them; original thinkers set them in motion, as Rousseau enunciated the ideas which led to the French Revolution. The great thinkers of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were divines, the men whom the Reformation produced. It was Luther preaching the right of private judgment, and Calvin pushing out the doctrine of the majesty of God to its remotest logical sequence, and Latimer appealing to every man's personal responsibility to God, and Gustavus Adolphus fighting for religious liberty, and the Huguenots protesting against religious persecution, and Thomas Cromwell sweeping away the abominations of the Papacy, and the Geneva divines who settled in England during the reign of Elizabeth, — it was all these that produced Oliver Cromwell.

He was a Puritan, and hence he was a reformer, not in church matters merely, but in all those things which are connected with civil liberty, — for there is as close a connection between Protestantism and liberty as between Catholicism and absolutism. The Puritans

intensely hated everything which reminded them of Rome, even the holidays of the Church, organs, stained-glass, cathedrals, and the rich dresses of the clergy. They even tried to ignore Christmas and Easter, though consecrated by the early Church. They hated the Middle Ages, looked with disgust upon the past, and longed to try experiments, not only in religion, but in politics and social life. The only antiquity which had authority to them was the Jewish Commonwealth, because it was a theocracy, and recognized God Almighty as the supreme ruler of the world. Hence they adhered to the strictness of the Jewish Sabbath, and baptized their children with Hebrew names.

Now to such a people, stern, lofty, ascetic, legal, spiritual, — conservative of whatever the Bible reveals, yet progressive and ardent for reforms, — the rule of the Stuarts was intolerable. It was intolerable because it seemed to lean towards Catholicism, and because it was tyrannical and averse to changes. The King was ruled by favorites; and these favorites were either bigots in religion, like Archbishop Laud, or were tyrannical or unscrupulous in their efforts to sustain the King in despotic measures and crush popular agitations, like the Earl of Strafford, or were men of pleasure and vanity like the Duke of Buckingham. Charles I. was detested by the Puritans even more than his father James. They looked upon him as more than half a Papist, a

despot, utterly insincere, indifferent to the welfare of the country, intent only on exalting himself and his throne at the expense of the interests of the people, whose aspirations he scorned and whose rights he trampled upon. In his eyes they had no *rights*, only *duties;* and duties to him as an anointed sovereign, to rule as he liked, with parliaments or without parliaments; yea, to impose taxes arbitrarily, and grant odious monopolies: for the State was his, to be managed as a man would manage a farm; and those who resisted this encroachment on the liberties of the nation were to be fined, imprisoned, executed, as pestilent disturbers of the public peace. He would form dangerous alliances with Catholic powers, marry his children to Catholic princes, appoint Catholics to high office, and compromise the dignity of the nation as a Protestant State. His ministers, his judges, his high officials were simply his tools, and perpetually insulted the nation by their arrogance, their venality, and their shameful disregard of the Constitution. In short, he seemed bent on imposing a tyrannical yoke, hard to be endured, and to punish unlawfully those who resisted it, or even murmured against it. He would shackle the press, and muzzle the members of parliament.

Thus did this King appear to the Puritans, — at this time a large and influential party, chiefly Presbyterian, and headed by many men of rank and character, all

of whom detested the Roman Catholic religion as the source of all religious and political evils, and who did not scruple to call the Papacy by the hardest names, such as the "Scarlet Mother," "Antichrist," and the like. They had seceded from the Established Church in the reign of Elizabeth, and became what was then called Non-conformists. Had they been treated wisely, had any respect been shown to their opinions and rights,—for the right of worshipping God according to individual conscience is the central and basal pillar of Protestantism,—had this undoubted right of private judgment, the great emancipating idea of that age, been respected, the Puritans would have sought relief in constitutional resistance, for they were conservative and loyal, as English people ever have been, even in Canada and Australia. They were not bent on *revolution;* they only desired *reform.* So their representatives in Parliament framed the famous "Petition of Right," in which were reasserted the principles of constitutional liberty. This earnest, loyal, but angry Parliament, being troublesome, was dissolved, and Charles undertook for eleven years to reign without one,—against all precedents,—with Strafford and Laud for his chief advisers and ministers. He reigned by Star Chamber decrees, High-commission courts, issuing proclamations, resorting to forced loans, tampering with justice, removing judges, imprisoning obnoxious

men without trial, insulting and humiliating the Puritans, and openly encouraging a religion of "millineries and upholsteries," not only illegally, but against the wishes and sentiments of the better part of the nation,— thus undermining his own throne; for all thrones are based on the love of the people.

The financial difficulties of the King — for the most absolute of kings cannot extort *all* the money they want — compelled him to assemble another Parliament at an alarming crisis of popular indignation which he did not see, when popular leaders began to say that even kings must rule *by* the people and not *without* the people.

This new Parliament, with Hampden and Pym for leaders, though fierce and aggressive, would have been contented with constitutional reform, like Mirabeau at one period. But the King, ill-advised, obstinate, blinded, would not accept reform; he would reign like the Bourbons, or not at all. The reforms which the Parliament desired were reasonable and just. It would abolish arbitrary arrests, the Star Chamber decrees, taxes without its consent, cruelty to Nonconformists, the ascendency of priests, irresponsible ministers, and offensive symbols of Romanism. If these reforms had been granted, — and such a sovereign as Elizabeth would have yielded, however reluctantly, — there would have been no English revo-

lution. Or even if the popular leaders had been more patient, and waited for their time, and been willing to carry out these reforms constitutionally, there would have been no revolution. But neither the King nor Parliament would yield, and the Parliament was dissolved.

The next Parliament was not only angry, it was defiant and unscrupulous. It resolved on revolution, and determined to put the King himself aside. It began with vigorous measures, and impeached both Laud and Strafford, — doubtless very able men, but not fitted for their times. It decreed sweeping changes, usurped the executive authority, appealed to arms, and made war on the government. The King also on his part appealed to the sword, which now alone could settle the difficulties. The contest was inevitable. The nation clamored for reform; the King would not grant it, the Parliament would not wait to secure it constitutionally. Both parties were angry and resolute; reason departed from the councils of the nation; passion now ruled, and civil war began. It was not, at first, a question about the form of government, — whether a king or an elected ruler should bear sway; it was purely a question of reforms in the existing government, limiting of course the power of the King, — but reforms deemed so vital to the welfare of the nation that the best people were willing to shed their blood to secure them: and

if reason and moderation could have borne sway, that angry strife might have been averted. But people will not listen to reason in times of maddening revolution; they prefer to fight, and run their chances and incur the penalty. And when contending parties appeal to the sword, then all ordinary rules are set aside, and success belongs to the stronger, and the victors exact what they please. The rules of all deadly and desperate warfare seem to recognize this.

The fortune of war put the King into the hands of the revolutionists; and in fear, more than in vengeance, they executed him, — just what he would have done to *their* leaders if *he* had won. "Stone-dead," said Falkland, "hath no fellow." In a national conflagration we lose sight of laws, even of written constitutions. Great necessities compel extraordinary measures, not such as are sustained either by reason or precedents. The great lesson of war, especially of civil war, is, that contending parties might better make great concessions than resort to it, for it is certain to demoralize a nation. Heated partisans hate compromise; yet war itself generally ends in compromise. It is interesting to see how many constitutions, how many institutions in both Church and State, are based on compromise.

Now, it was amid all the fierce contentions of that revolutionary age, — an age of intense earnestness

when the grandest truths were agitated; an age of experiment, of bold discussions, of wild fanaticisms, of bitter hatreds, of unconquerable prejudices, yet of great loftiness and spiritual power, — that the star of Oliver Cromwell arose. He was born in the year 1599, of a good family. He was a country squire, a gentleman farmer, though not much given to fox-hunting or dinner hilarities, preferring to read political pamphlets, or to listen to long sermons, or to hold discussions on grace, predestination, free-will, and foreknowledge absolute. His favorite doctrine was the second coming of Christ and the reign of the saints, the elect, — to whom of course he belonged. He had visions and rhapsodies, and believed in special divine illumination. Cromwell was not a Presbyterian, but an Independent; and the Independents were the most advanced party of his day, both in politics and religion. The progressive man of that age was a Calvinist, in all the grandeur and in all the narrowness of that unfashionable and misunderstood creed. The time had not come for "advanced thinkers" to repudiate a personal God and supernatural agencies. Then an atheist, or even a deist, and indeed a materialist of the school of Democritus and Lucretius, was unknown. John Milton was one of the representative men of the Puritans of the seventeenth century, — men who colonized New England, and planted the germs of institutions which have spread to the Rocky Mountains

Cromwell on his farm, one of the landed gentry, had a Cambridge education, and was early an influential man. His sagacity, his intelligence, his honesty, and his lofty religious life marked him out as a fit person to represent his county in parliament. He at once became the associate of such men as Hampden and Pym. He did not make very graceful speeches, and he had an ungainly person; but he was eloquent in a rude way, since he had strong convictions and good sense. He was probably violent, for he hated the abuses of the times, and he hated Rome and the prelacy. He represented the extreme left; that is, he was a radical, and preferred revolution to tyranny. Yet even he would probably have accepted reform if reform had been possible without violence. But Cromwell had no faith in the King or his ministers, and was inclined to summary measures. He afterwards showed this tendency of character in his military career. He was one of those earnest and practical people who could not be fooled with. So he became a leader of those who were most violent against the Government. During the Long Parliament, Cromwell sat for Cambridge; which fact shows that he was then a marked man, far from being unimportant. This was the Parliament, assembled in 1640, which impeached Strafford and Laud, which abolished the Star Chamber, and inaugurated the civil war, that began when Charles

left Whitehall, January, 1642, for York. The Parliament solicited contributions, called out the militia, and appointed to the command of the forces the Earl of Essex, a Presbyterian, who established his headquarters at Northampton, while Charles unfurled the royal standard at Nottingham.

Cromwell was forty-two when he buckled on his sword as a volunteer. He subscribed five hundred pounds to the cause of liberty, raised a troop of horse, which gradually swelled into that famous regiment of one thousand men, called "Ironsides," which was never beaten. Of this regiment he was made colonel in the spring of 1643. He had distinguished himself at Edgehill in the first year of the war, but he drew upon himself the eyes of the nation at the battle of Marston Moor, July, 1644, — gained by the discipline of his men, — which put the north of England into the hands of Parliament. He was then lieutenant-general, second in command to the Earl of Manchester. The second battle of Newbury, though a success, gave Cromwell, then one of the most influential members of Parliament, an occasion to complain of the imbecility of the noblemen who controlled the army, and who were Presbyterians. The "self-denying ordinance," which prohibited members of Parliament from command in the army, was a blow at Presbyterianism and aristocracy, and marked the growing power of the Independents. It

was planned by Cromwell, although it would have deprived him also of his command; but he was made an exception to the rule, and he knew he would be, since his party could not spare him.

Then was fought the battle of Naseby, June 14, 1645, in which Cromwell commanded the right wing of the army, Fairfax (nominally his superior general) the centre, and Ireton the left; against Prince Rupert and Charles. The battle was won by the bravery of Cromwell, and decided the fortunes of the King, although he was still able to keep the field. Cromwell now became the foremost man in England. For two years he resided chiefly in London, taking an important part in negotiations with the King, and in the contest between the Independents and Presbyterians, — the former of which represented the army, while the latter still had the ascendency in Parliament.

On the 16th of August, 1648, was fought the battle of Preston, in which Cromwell defeated the Scotch army commanded by the Duke of Hamilton, which opened Edinburgh to his victorious troops, and made him commander-in-chief of the armies of the Commonwealth. The Presbyterians, at least of Scotland, it would seem, preferred now the restoration of the King to the ascendency of Cromwell with the army to back him, for it was the army and not the Parliament which had given him supreme command.

Then followed the rapid conquest of the Scots, the return of the victorious general to London, and the suppression of the liberty of Parliament, for it was purged of its Presbyterian leaders. The ascendency of the Independents began; for though in a minority, they were backed by an army which obeyed implicitly the commands and even the wishes of Cromwell.

The great tragedy which disgraced the revolution was now acted. The unfortunate King, whose fate was sealed at the battle of Naseby, after various vicissitudes and defeats, put himself into the hands of the Scots and made a league with the Presbyterians. After Edinburgh was taken, they virtually sold him to the victor, who caused him to be brought in bitter mockery to Hampton Court, where he was treated with ironical respect. In his reverses Charles would have made *any* concessions; and the Presbyterians, who first took up arms against him, would perhaps have accepted them. But it was too late. Cromwell and the Independents now reigned, — a party that had been driven into violent measures, and which had sought the subversion of the monarchy itself.

Charles is brought to a mock trial by a decimated Parliament, is condemned and executed, and the old monarchy is supplanted by a military despotism. "The roaring conflagration of anarchies" is succeeded by the rule of the strongest man.

Much has been written and said about that execution, or martyrdom, or crime, as it has been variously viewed by partisans. It simply was the sequence of the revolution, of the appeal of both parties to the sword. It may have been necessary or unnecessary, a blunder or a crime, but it was the logical result of a bitter war; it was the cruel policy of a conquering power. Those who supported it were able men, who deemed it the wisest thing to do; who dreaded a reaction, who feared for themselves, and sought by this means to perpetuate their sway. As one of the acts of revolution, it must be judged by the revolution itself. The point is, not whether it was wrong to take the life of the King, if it were a military necessity, or seemed to be to the great leaders of the day, but whether it was right to take up arms in defence of rights which might have been gained by protracted constitutional agitation and resistance. The execution proved a blunder, because it did not take away the rights of Charles II., and created great abhorrence and indignation, not merely in foreign countries, but among a majority of the English people themselves, — and these, too, who had the prestige of wealth and culture. I do not believe the Presbyterian party, as represented by Hampden and Pym, and who like Mirabeau had applied the torch to revolutionary passions, would have consented to this foolish murder. Certainly the Episcopalians would not

have executed Charles, even if they could have been induced to cripple him.

But war is a conflagration; nothing can stop its ravages when it has fairly begun. They who go to war must abide the issue of war; they who take the sword must be prepared to perish by the sword. Thus far, in the history of the world, very few rights have been gained by civil war which could not have been gained in the end without it. The great rights which the people have secured in England for two hundred years are the result of an appeal to reason and justice. The second revolution was bloodless. The Parliament which first arrayed itself against the government of Charles was no mean foe, even if it had not resorted to arms. It held the purse-strings; it had the power to cripple the King, and to worry him into concessions. But if the King was resolved to attack the Parliament itself, and coerce it by a standing army, and destroy all liberty in England, then the question assumed another shape; the war then became defensive, and was plainly justifiable, and Charles could but accept the issue, even his own execution, if it seemed necessary to his conquerors. They took up arms in self-defence, and war, of course, brought to light the energies and talents of the greatest general, who as victor would have his reward. Cromwell concluded to sweep away the old monarchy, and reign himself

instead; and the execution of the King was one of his war measures. It was the penalty Charles paid for making war on his subjects, instead of ruling them according to the laws. His fate was hard and sad; we feel more compassion than indignation. In our times he would have been permitted to run away; but those stern and angry old revolutionists demanded his blood.

For this cruel or necessary act Cromwell is responsible more than any man in England, since he could have prevented it if he pleased. He ruled the army, which ruled the Parliament. It was not the nation, or the representatives of the nation, who decreed the execution of Charles. It was the army and the purged Parliament, composed chiefly of Independents, who wanted the subversion of the monarchy itself. Technically, Charles was tried by the Parliament, or the judges appointed by them; really, Cromwell was at the bottom of the affair, as much as John Calvin was responsible for the burning of Servetus, let partisans say what they please. There never has a great crime or blunder been committed on this earth which bigoted, or narrow, or zealous partisans have not attempted to justify. Zealous Catholics have justified even the slaughter of St. Bartholomew. Partisans have no law but expediency. All schemers, political, religious, and social, in the Catholic and Protestant

churches alike, seem to think that the end justifies the means, even in the most beneficent reforms; and when pushed to the wall by the logic of opponents, will fall back on the examples of the Old Testament. In defence of lying and cheating they will quote Abraham at the court of Pharaoh. There is no insult to the human understanding more flagrant, than the doctrine that we may do evil that good may come And yet the politics and reforms of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries seem to have been based on that miserable idea — expediency. Here Machiavelli is as vulnerable as Escobar, and Burleigh as well as Oliver Cromwell, who was not more profound in dissimulation than Queen Elizabeth herself. The best excuse we can render for the political and religious crimes of that age is, that they were in accordance with its ideas. And who is superior to the ideas of his age?

On the execution of the King, the supreme authority was nominally in the hands of Parliament. Of course all kinds of anarchies prevailed, and all government was unsettled. Charles II. was proclaimed King by the Scots, while the Duke of Ormond, in Ireland, joined the royal party to seat Charles II. on the throne. In this exigency Cromwell was appointed by the Parliament Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland.

Then followed the conquest of Ireland, in which

Cromwell distinguished himself for great military abilities. His vigorous and uncompromising measures, especially his slaughter of the garrison of Drogheda (a retaliatory act), have been severely condemned. But war in the hands of masters is never carried on sentimentally: the test of ability is success. The measures were doubtless hard and cruel; but Cromwell knew what he was about: he wished to bring the war to a speedy close, and felt intimidation to be the best course to pursue. Those ever restless Irish never afterwards molested him. In less than a year he was at leisure to oppose Charles II. in Scotland; and on the resignation of Fairfax he was made Captain-General of all the forces in the empire. The battle of Dunbar resulted in the total defeat of the Scots; while the "crowning mercy" at Worcester, Sept. 3, 1651, utterly blasted the hopes of Charles, and completely annihilated his forces.

The civil war, which raged nine years, was now finished, and Cromwell became supreme. But even the decimated Parliament was jealous, and raised an issue,—on which Cromwell dissolved it with a file of soldiers, and assembled another, neither elective nor representative, composed of his creatures, without experience, chiefly Anabaptists and Independents; which he soon did away with. He then called a council of leading men, who made him Lord Protector, December 13,

1653. Even the shadow of constitutional authority now vanishes, and Cromwell rules with absolute and untrammelled power, like Julius Cæsar or Napoleon Bonaparte. He rules on the very principles which he condemned in Charles I. The revolution ends in a military despotism.

If there was ever a usurpation, this was one. Liberty gave her last sigh on the remonstrance of Sir Harry Vane, and a military hero, by means of his army, stamps his iron heel on England. He dissolves the very body from which he received his own authority he refuses to have any check on his will; he imposes taxes without the consent of the people, — the very thing for which he took up arms against Charles I.; he reigns alone, on despotic principles, as absolute as Louis XIV.; he enshrouds himself in royal state at Hampton Court; he even seeks to bequeath his absolute power to his son. And if Richard Cromwell had reigned like his father Oliver, then the cause of liberty would have been lost.

All this is cold, unvarnished history. We cannot get over or around these facts; they blaze out to the eyes of all readers, and will blaze to the most distant ages. Cromwell began as a reformer, but ended as a usurper. Whatever name he goes by, whatever title he may have assumed, he became, by force of his victories and of his army, the absolute ruler of England, — as

Cæsar did of Rome, and Napoleon of Paris. We may palliate or extenuate this fact; we may even excuse it on the ground that the State had drifted into anarchy; that only he, as the stronger man, could save England; that there was no other course open to him as a patriot; and that it was a most fortunate thing for England that he seized the reins, and became a tyrant to put down anarchies. But whatever were the excuses by which Cromwell justified himself, or his admirers justify him, let us not deny the facts. It may have been necessary, under his circumstances, to reign alone, by the aid of his standing army. But do not attempt to gloss over the veritable fact that he did reign without the support of Parliament, and in defiance of all constitutional authorities. It was not the nation which elevated him to supreme power, but his soldiers. At no time would any legitimate Parliament, or any popular voice, have made him an absolute ruler. He could not even have got a plebiscitum, as Louis Napoleon did. He was not liked by the nation at large, — not even by the more enlightened and conservative of the Puritans, such as the Presbyterians; and as for the Episcopalians, they looked upon him not only as a usurper but as a hypocrite.

It is difficult to justify such an act as usurpation and military tyranny by the standard of an immutable morality. If the overturning of all constitutional

authority by a man who professed to be a reformer, yet who reigned illegally as a despot, can be defended, it is only on the principle of expediency, that the end justifies the means, — the plea of the plotter, and of all the despots who have overturned constitutions and national liberties. But this is rank and undisguised Cæsarism. The question then arises, Was it necessary that a Cæsar should reign at Hampton Court? Some people think it was; and all admit that after the execution of the King there was no settled government, nothing but bitter, intolerant factions, each of which wished its own ascendency, and all were alike unscrupulous. Revolution ever creates factions and angry parties, more or less violent. It is claimed by many that a good government was impossible with these various and contending parties, and that nothing but anarchy would have existed had not Cromwell seized the reins, and sustained himself by a standing army, and ruled despotically. Again, others think that he was urged by a pressure which even he could not resist, — that of the army; that he was controlled by circumstances; that he could do no otherwise unless he resigned England to her fate, — to the anarchy of quarrelling and angry parties, who would not listen to reason, and who were too inexperienced to govern in such stormy times. The Episcopalians certainly, and the Presbyterians probably, would have restored

Charles II., — and this Cromwell regarded as a great possible calamity. If the King had been restored, all the fruit of the revolution would have been lost: there would have been a renewed reign of frivolities, insincerities, court scandals, venalities, favorites, and disguised Romanism, — yea, an alliance would have been formed with the old tyrants of Europe.

Cromwell was no fool, and he had a great insight into the principles on which the stability and prosperity of a nation rested. He doubtless felt that the nation required a strong arm at the helm, and that no one could save England in such a storm but himself. I believe he was sincere in this conviction, — a conviction based on profound knowledge of men and the circumstances of the age. I believe he was willing to be aspersed, even by his old friends, and heartily cursed by his enemies, if he could guide the ship of state into a safe harbor. I am inclined to believe that he was patriotic in his intentions; that he wished to save the country even, if necessary, by illegal means; that he believed there was a higher law *for him*, and that an enlightened posterity would vindicate his name and memory. He was not deceived as to his abilities, even if he were as to his call. He knew he was the strongest man in England, and that only the strongest could rule. He was willing to assume the responsibility, whatever violence he should do to his early princi-

ples, or to the opinions of those with whom he was at first associated. If there was anything that marked the character of Cromwell, it was the abiding sense, from first to last, of his personal responsibility to God Almighty, whose servant and instrument he felt himself to be. I believe he was loyal to his conscience, if not to his cause. He may have committed grave errors, for he was not infallible. It may have been an error that he ruled virtually without a Parliament, since it was better that a good measure should be defeated than that the cause of liberty should be trodden under foot. It was better that parliaments should wrangle and quarrel than that there should be no representation of the nation at all. And it was an undoubted error to transmit his absolute authority to his son, for this was establishing a new dynasty of kings. One of the worst things which Napoleon ever did was to seat his brothers on the old thrones of Europe. Doubtless, Cromwell wished to perpetuate the policy of his government, but he had no right to perpetuate a despotism in his own family: that was an insult to the nation and to the cause of constitutional liberty. Here he was selfish and ambitious, for, great as he was, he was not greater than the nation or his cause.

But I need not dwell on the blunders of Cromwell, if we call them by no harsher name. It would be harsh to judge him for his mistakes or sins under his peculiar

circumstances, his hand in the execution of Charles I. his intriguing principles, his cruelties in Ireland, his dispersion of parliaments, and his usurpation of supreme power. Only let us call things by their right names; we gain nothing by glossing over defects. The historians of the Bible tell us how Abraham told lies to the King of Egypt, and David caused Uriah to be slain after he had appropriated his wife. Yet who were greater and better, upon the whole, than these favorites of Heaven?

Cromwell earned his great fame as one of the wisest statesmen and ablest rulers that England ever had. Like all monarchs, he is to be judged by the services he rendered to civilization. He was not a faultless man, but he proved himself a great benefactor. Whether we like him or not, we are compelled to admit that his administration was able and beneficent, and that he seemed to be actuated by a sincere desire to do all the good he could. If he was ambitious, his ambition was directed to the prosperity and glory of his country. If he levied taxes without the consent of the nation, he spent the money economically, wisely, and unselfishly. He sought no inglorious pomps; he built no expensive palaces; he gave no foolish fêtes; nor did he seek to disguise his tyranny by amusing or demoralizing the people, like the old Roman Cæsars. He would even have established a constitutional monarchy, had it been

practicable. The plots of royalists tempted him to appoint major-generals to responsible situations. To protect his life, he resorted to guards. He could not part with his power, but he used it for the benefit of the nation. If he did not reign by or through the people, he reigned *for* the people. He established religious liberty, and tolerated all sects but Catholics and Quakers. The Presbyterians were his enemies, but he never persecuted them. He had a great regard for law, and appointed the ablest and best men to high judicial positions. Sir Matthew Hale, whom he made chief-justice, was the greatest lawyer in England, an ornament to any country. Cromwell made strenuous efforts to correct the abuses of the court of chancery and of criminal law. He established trial by jury for political offences. He tried to procure the formal re-admission of the Jews to England. He held conferences with George Fox. He snatched Biddle, the Socinian, from the fangs of persecutors. He fostered commerce and developed the industrial resources of the nation, like Burleigh and Colbert. He created a navy, and became the father of the maritime greatness of England. He suppressed all license among the soldiers, although his power rested on their loyalty to him. He honored learning and exalted the universities, placing in them learned men. He secured the union between England and Scotland, and called representatives from Scotland

to his parliaments. He adopted a generous policy with the colonies in North America, and freed them from rapacious governors. His war policy was not for mere aggrandizement. He succeeded Gustavus Adolphus as the protector of Protestantism on the Continent. He sought to make England respected among all the nations; and, as righteousness exalts a nation, he sought to maintain public morality. His court was simple and decorous; he gave no countenance to levities and follies, and his own private life was pure and religious, — so that there was general admiration of his conduct as well as of his government.

Cromwell was certainly very fortunate in his régime. The army and navy did wonders; Blake and Monk gained great victories; Gibraltar was taken, — one of the richest prizes that England ever gained in war. The fleets of Spain were destroyed; the trade of the Indies was opened to his ships. He maintained the "balance of power." He punished the African pirates of the Mediterranean. His glory reached Asia, and extended to America. So great was his renown that the descendants of Abraham, even on the distant plains of Asia, inquired of one another if he were not the servant of the King of Kings, whom they were looking for. A learned Rabbi even came from Asia to London for the purpose of investigating his pedigree, thinking to discover in him the "Lion of the

tribe of Judah." If his policy had been followed out by his successors, Louis XIV. would not have dared to revoke the Edict of Nantes; if he had reigned ten years longer, there would have been no revival of Romanism. I suppose England never had so enlightened a monarch. He was more like Charlemagne than Richelieu. Contrast him with Louis XIV., a contemporaneous despot: Cromwell devoted all his energies to develop the resources of his country, while Louis did what he could to waste them; Cromwell's reign was favorable to the development of individual genius, but Louis was such an intolerable egotist that at the close of his reign all the great lights had disappeared; Cromwell was tolerant, Louis was persecuting; Cromwell laid the foundation of an indefinite expansion, Louis sowed the seeds of discontent and revolution. Both indeed took the sword, — the one to dethrone the Stuarts, the other to exterminate the Protestants. Cromwell bequeathed to successors the moral force of personal virtue, Louis paved the way for the most disgraceful excesses; Cromwell spent his leisure hours with his family and with divines, Louis with his favorites and mistresses; Cromwell would listen to expostulations, Louis crushed all who differed from him. The career of the former was a progressive rise, that of the latter a progressive fall. The ultimate influence of Cromwell's policy was to develop the great

ness of England; that of Louis, to cut the sinews of national wealth, and poison those sources of renovation which still remained. The memory of Cromwell is dear to good men in spite of his defects; while that of Louis, in spite of his graces and urbanities, is a watchword for all that is repulsive in despotism. Hence Cromwell is more and more a favorite with enlightened minds, while Louis is more and more regarded as a man who made the welfare of the State subordinate to his own glory. In a word, Cromwell feared only God; while Louis feared only hell. The piety of the one was lofty; that of the other was technical, formal, and pharisaical. The chief defect in the character of Cromwell was his expediency, or what I call duplicity, — following out good ends by questionable means; the chief defect in the character of Louis was an absorbing egotism, which sacrificed everything for private pleasure or interest.

The difficulty in judging Cromwell seems to me to be in the imperfection of our standards of public morality. We are apt to excuse in a ruler what we condemn in a private man. If Oliver Cromwell is to be measured by the standard which accepts expediency as a guide in life, he will be excused for his worst acts. If he is to be measured by an immutable standard, he will be picked to pieces. In regard to his private life, aside from cant and dissimulation, there is not much to

condemn, and there is much to praise. He was not a libertine like Henry IV., nor an egotist like Napoleon. He delighted in the society of the learned and the pious; he was susceptible to grand sentiments; he was just in his dealings and fervent in his devotions. He was liberal, humane, simple, unostentatious, and economical. He was indeed ambitious, but his ambition was noble.

His intellectual defect was his idea of special divine illumination, which made him visionary and rhapsodical and conceited. He was a second-adventist, and believed that Christ would return, at no distant time, to establish the reign of the saints upon the earth. But his morals were as irreproachable as those of Marcus Aurelius. Like Michael Angelo, he despised frivolities, though it is said he relished rough jokes, like Abraham Lincoln. He was conscientious in the discharge of what he regarded as duties, and seemed to feel his responsibility to God as the sovereign of the universe. His family revered him as much as the nation respected him. He was not indeed lovable, like Saint Louis; but he can never lose the admiration of mankind, since the glory of his administration was not sullied by those private vices which destroy esteem and ultimately undermine both power and influence. He was one of those world-heroes of whom nations will be proud as they advance in the toleration of

human infirmities, — as they draw distinction between those who live for themselves and those who live for their country, — and the recognition of those principles on which all progress is based.

Cromwell died prematurely, if not for his fame, at least for his usefulness. His reign as Protector lasted only five years, yet what wonders he did in that brief period! He suppressed the anarchies of the revolution, he revived law, he restored learning, he developed the resources of his country; he made it respected at home and abroad, and shed an imperishable glory on his administration, — but "on the threshold of success he met the inexorable enemy."

It was a stormy night, August 30, 1658, when the wild winds were roaring and all nature was overclouded with darkness and gloom, that the last intelligible words of the dying hero were heard by his attendants: "O Lord! though I am a miserable sinner, I am still in covenant with Thee. Thou hast made me, though very unworthy, an instrument to do Thy people good; and go on, O Lord, to deliver them and make Thy name glorious throughout the world!" These dying words are the key alike to his character and his mission. He believed himself to be an instrument of the Almighty Sovereign in whom he believed, and whom, with all his faults and errors, he sought to serve, and in whom he trusted.

And it is in this light, chiefly, that the career of this remarkable man is to be viewed. An instrument of God he plainly was, to avenge the wrongs of an insulted, an indignant, and an honest nation, and to impress upon the world the necessity of wise and benignant rulers. He arose to vindicate the majesty of public virtue, to rebuke the egotism of selfish kings, to punish the traitors of important trusts. He arose to point out the true sources of national prosperity, to head off the troops of a renovated Romanism, to promote liberty of conscience in all matters of religious belief. He was raised up as a champion of Protestantism when kings were returning to Rome, and as an awful chastiser of the spirited but quarrelsome Irish who have ever been hostile to law and order, and uncontrollable by any influence but that of fear. But, above all, he was raised up to try the experiment of liberty in the seventeenth century.

That experiment unfortunately failed. All sects and parties sought ascendency rather than the public good; angry and inexperienced, they refused to compromise. Sectarianism was the true hydra that baffled the energy of the courageous combatant. Parliaments were factious, meddlesome, and inexperienced, and sought to block the wheels of government rather than promote wholesome legislation. The people hankered for their old pleasures, and were impatient of restraint; their leaders

were demagogues or fanatics; they could not be coerced by mild measures or appeals to enlightened reason Hence coercive measures were imperative; and these could be carried only by a large standing army, — ever the terror and menace of liberty; the greatest blot on constitutional governments, — a necessity, but an evil, since the military power should be subordinate to the civil, not the civil to the military. The iron hand by which Cromwell was obliged to rule, if he ruled at all, at last became odious to all classes, since they had many rights which were ignored. When they clamored for the blood of an anointed tyrant, they did not bargain for a renewed despotism more irksome and burdensome than the one they had suppressed. The public rejoicings, the universal enthusiasm, the brilliant spectacles and fêtes, the flattering receptions and speeches which hailed the restoration of Charles II., showed unmistakably that the régime of Cromwell, though needed for a time, was unpopular, and was not in accordance with the national aspirations. If they were to be ruled by a tyrant, they preferred to be ruled according to precedents and traditions and hallowed associations. The English people loved then, as they love now, as they ever have loved, royalty, — the reign of kings according to the principles of legitimacy. They have shown the disposition to fetter these kings, not to dispense with them.

So the experiment of Cromwell and his party failed. How mournful it must have seemed to the original patriots of the revolution, that hard, iron, military rule was all that England had gained by the struggles and the blood of her best people. Wherefore had treasures been lavished in a nine years' contest; wherefore the battles of Marston Moor and Worcester; wherefore the eloquence of Pym and Hampden? All wasted. The house which had been swept and garnished was re-entered by devils worse than before.

Thus did this experiment seem; teaching, at least, this useful and impressive lesson, — that despotism will succeed unwise and violent efforts for reform; that reforms are not to be carried on by bayonets, but by reason; that reformers must be patient, and must be contented with constitutional measures; that any violation of the immutable laws of justice will be visited with unlooked-for retribution.

But sad as this experiment seemed, can it be pronounced to be wholly a failure? No earnest human experiment is ever thrown away. The great ideas of Cromwell, and of those who originally took up arms with him, entered into new combinations. The spirit remained, if the form was changed. After a temporary reaction, the love of liberty returned. The second revolution of 1688 was the logical sequence of the first. It was only another act in the great drama of national

development. The spirit which overthrew Charles I. also overturned the throne of James II.; but the wisdom gained by experience sent him into exile, instead of executing him on the scaffold. Two experiments with those treacherous Stuarts were necessary before the conviction became fastened on the mind of the English people that constitutional liberty could not exist while they remained upon the throne; and the spirit which had burst out into a blazing flame two generations earlier, was now confined within constitutional limits. But it was not suppressed; it produced salutary reforms with every advancing generation. "It produced," says Macaulay, "the famous Declaration of Right, which guaranteed the liberties of the English upon their present basis; which again led to the freedom of the press, the abolition of slavery, Catholic emancipation, and representative reform." Had the experiment not been tried by Cromwell and his party, it might have been tried by worse men, whose gospel of rights would be found in the "social contract" of Rousseau, rather than in the "catechism" of the Westminster divines. It was fortunate that revolutionary passions should have raged in the bosoms of Christians rather than of infidels, — of men who believed in obedience to a personal God, rather than men who teach the holiness of untutored impulse, the infallibility of majorities, and the majesty of the unaided

intellect of man. And then who can estimate the value of Cromwell's experience on the patriots of our own Revolution? His example may even have taught the great Washington how dangerous and inconsistent it would be to accept an earthly crown, while denouncing the tyranny of kings, and how much more enduring is that fame which is cherished in a nation's heart than that which is blared by the trumpet of idolatrous soldiers indifferent to those rights which form the basis of social civilization.

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LOUIS XIV.

A. D. 1638–1715.

THE FRENCH MONARCHY.

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THE verdict of this age in reference to Louis XIV. is very different from that which his own age pronounced. Two hundred years ago his countrymen called him *Le Grand Monarque*, and his glory filled the world. Since Charlemagne, no monarch had been the object of such unbounded panegyric as he, until Napoleon appeared. He lived in an atmosphere of perpetual incense, and reigned in dazzling magnificence.

Although he is not now regarded in the same light as he was in the seventeenth century, and originated no great movement that civilization values, — in fact was anything but a permanent benefactor to his country or mankind, — yet Louis XIV. is still one of the Beacon Lights of history, for warning if not for guidance. His reign was an epoch; it was not only one of the longest in human annals, but also one of the most brilliant, imposing, and interesting Whatever opinion may exist as to his inherent m

tellectual greatness, no candid historian denies the power of his will, the force of his character, and the immense influence he exerted. He was illustrious, if he was not great; he was powerful, if he made fatal mistakes; he was feared and envied by all nations, even when he stood alone; and it took all Europe combined to strip him of the conquests which his generals made, and to preserve the "balance of power" which he had disturbed. With all Europe in arms against him, he, an old and broken-hearted man, contrived to preserve, by his fortitude and will, the territories he had inherited; and he died peacefully upon his bed, at the age of seventy-six, still the most absolute king that ever reigned in France. A man so strong, so fortunate until his latter years; so magnificent in his court, which he made the most brilliant of modern times; so lauded by the great geniuses who surrounded his throne, all of whom looked up to him as a central sun of power and glory,—is not to be flippantly judged, or ruthlessly hurled from that proud pinnacle on which he was seated, amid the acclamations of two generations. His successes dazzled the world; his misfortunes excited its pity, except among those who were sufferers by his needless wars or his cruel persecutions. His virtues and his defects both stand out in bold relief, and will make him a character to meditate upon as long as history shall be written.

The reign of Louis XIV. would be remarkable for the great men who shed lustre on his throne, if he had himself been contemptible. Voltaire doubted if any age ever saw such an illustrious group, and he compares it with the age of Pericles in Greece, with that of Augustus in Rome, and that of the Medici in Italy, — four great epochs in intellectual excellence, which have never been surpassed in brilliancy and variety of talent. No such generals had arisen since the palmy days of Roman grandeur as Condé, Turenne, Luxembourg, Vauban, Berwick, and Villars, if we except Gustavus Adolphus, and those generals with whom the marshals of Louis contended, such as William III., Marlborough, and Eugene. No monarch was ever served by abler ministers than Colbert and Louvois; the former developing the industries and resources of a great country, and the latter organizing its forces for all the exigencies of vast military campaigns. What galaxy of poets more brilliant than that which shed glory on the throne of this great king! — men like Corneille, Boileau, Fontanelle, La Fontaine, Racine, and Molière; no one of them a Dante or a Shakspeare, but all together shining as a constellation. What great jurists and lawyers were Le Tellier and D'Aguesseau and Molé! What great prelates and preachers were Bossuet, Fénelon, Bourdaloue, Massillon, Fléchier, Saurin — unrivalled for eloquence in any age! What original

and profound thinkers were Pascal, Descartes, Helvetius, Malebranche, Nicole, and Quesnel! Until the seventeenth century, what more respectable historians had arisen than Dupin, Tillemont, Mabillon, and Fleury; or critics and scholars than Bayle, Arnauld, De Sacy, and Calmet! La Rochefoucauld uttered maxims which were learned by heart by giddy courtiers. Great painters and sculptors, such as Le Brun, Poussin, Claude Lorrain, and Girardon, ornamented the palaces which Mansard erected; while Le Nôtre laid out the gardens of those palaces which are still a wonder.

It must be borne in mind that Louis XIV. had an intuitive perception of genius and talent, which he was proud to reward and anxious to appropriate. Although his own education had been neglected, he had a severe taste and a disgust of all vulgarity, so that his manners were decorous and dignified in the midst of demoralizing pleasures. Proud, both from adulation and native disposition, he yet was polite and affable. He never passed a woman without lifting his hat, and he uniformly rose when a lady entered into his presence. But, with all his politeness, he never unbent, even in the society of his most intimate friends, so jealous was he of his dignity and power. Unscrupulous in his public transactions, and immoral in his private relations with women, he had a great respect for the

ordinances of religion, and was punctilious in the outward observances of the Catholic Church. The age itself was religious; and so was he, in a technical and pharisaical piety and petty ritualistic duties. He was a bigot and a persecutor, which fact endeared him to the Jesuits, by whom, in matters of conscience. he was ruled, so that he became their tool even while he thought he controlled everything. He was as jealous of his power as he was of his dignity, and he learned to govern himself as well as his subjects. He would himself submit to the most rigid formalities in order to exact a rigorous discipline and secure unconditional obedience from others. No one ever dared openly to thwart his will or oppose his wishes, although he could be led through his passions and his vanity: he was imperious in his commands, and exacting in the services he demanded from all who surrounded his person. He had perfect health, a strong physique, great aptitude for business, and great regularity in his habits. It was difficult to deceive him, for he understood human nature, and thus was able to select men of merit and talent for all high offices in State and Church.

In one sense Louis XIV. seems to have been even patriotic, since he identified his own glory with that of the nation, having learned something from Richelieu, whose policy he followed. Hence he was supported by the people, if he was not loved, because he was

ambitious of making France the most powerful nation in Christendom. The love of glory ever has been one of the characteristics of the French nation, and this passion the king impersonated, which made him dear to the nation, as Napoleon was before he became intoxicated by power; and hence Louis had the power of rallying his subjects in great misfortunes. They forgave extravagance in palace-building, from admiration of magnificence. They were proud of a despot who called out the praises of the world. They saw in his parks, his gardens, his marble halls, his tapestries, his pictures, and his statues a glory which belonged to France as well as to him. They marched joyfully in his armies, whatever their sacrifices, for he was only leading them to glory,—an empty illusion, yet one of those words which has ruled the world, since it is an expression of that vanity which has its roots in the deepest recesses of the soul. Glory is the highest aspiration of egotism, and Louis was an incarnation of egotism, like Napoleon after him. They both represented the master passions of the people to whom they appealed. "Never," says St. Simon, "has any one governed with a better grace, or, by the manner of bestowing, more enhanced the value of his favors. Never has any one sold at so high a price his words, nay his very smiles and glances." And then, "so imposing and majestic was his air that those who addressed him must first accustom themselves to

his appearance, not to be overawed. No one ever knew better how to maintain a certain manner which made him appear great." Yet it is said that his stature was small. No one knew better than he how to impress upon his courtiers the idea that kings are of a different blood from other men. He even knew how to invest vice and immorality with an air of elegance, and was capable of generous sentiments and actions. He on one occasion sold a gold service of plate for four hundred thousand francs, to purchase bread for starving troops. If haughty, exacting, punctilious, he was not cold. Even his rigid etiquette and dignified reserve were the dictates of statecraft, as well as of natural inclination. He seemed to feel that he was playing a great part, with the eyes of the world upon him; so that he was an actor as Napoleon was, but a more consistent one, because in his egotism he never forgot himself, not even among his mistresses. As *grand monarque*, the arbiter of all fortunes, the central sun of all glory, was he always figuring before the eyes of men. He never relaxed his habits of ceremony and ostentation, nor his vigilance as an administrator, nor his iron will, nor his thirst for power; so that he ruled as he wished until he died, in spite of the reverses of his sad old age, and without losing the respect of his subjects, oppressed as they were with taxes and humiliated by national disasters.

Such were some of the traits which made Louis XIV a great sovereign, if not a great man. He was not only supported by the people who were dazzled by his magnificence, and by the great men who adorned his court, but he was aided by fortunate circumstances and great national ideas. He was heir of the powers of Richelieu and the treasures of Mazarin. Those two cardinals, who claimed equal rank with independent princes, higher than that of the old nobility, pursued essentially the same policy, although this policy was the fruit of Richelieu's genius; and this policy was the concentration of all authority in the hands of the king. Louis XIII. was the feeblest of the Bourbons, but he made his throne the first in Europe. Richelieu was a great benefactor to the cause of law, order, and industry, despotic as was his policy and hateful his character. When he died, worn out by his herculean labors, the nobles tried to regain the privileges and powers they had lost, and a miserable warfare called the "Fronde" was the result, carried on without genius or system. But the Fronde produced some heroes who were destined to be famous in the great wars of Louis XIV. Mazarin, with less ability than Richelieu, and more selfish, conquered in the end, by following out the policy of his predecessor. He developed the resources of the kingdom, besides accumulating an enormous fortune for himself, — about two hundred millions

of francs, — which, when he died, he bequeathed, not to the Church or his relatives, but to the young King, who thus became personally rich as well as strong. To have entered upon the magnificent inheritance which these two able cardinals bequeathed to the monarchy was most fortunate to Louis, — unrestricted power and enormous wealth.

But Louis was still more fortunate in reaping the benefits of the principle of royalty. We have in the United States but a feeble conception of the power of this principle in Europe in the seventeenth century; it was nursed by all the chivalric sentiments of the Middle Ages. The person of a king was sacred; he was regarded as divinely commissioned. The sacred oil poured on his head by the highest dignitary of the Church, at his coronation, imparted to him a sacred charm. All the influences of the Church, as well as those of Feudalism, set the king apart from all other men, as a consecrated monarch to rule the people. This loyalty to the throne had the sanction of the Jewish nation, and of all Oriental nations from the remotest ages. Hence the world has known no other form of government than that of kings and emperors, except in a few countries and for a brief period. Whatever the king decreed, had the force of irresistible law; no one dared to disobey a royal mandate but a rebel in actual hostilities. Resistance to royal authority was ruin. This royal power

was based on and enforced by the ideas of ages. Who can resist universally accepted ideas?

Moreover, in France especially, there was a chivalric charm about the person of a king; he was not only sacred, of purer blood than other people, but the greatest nobles were proud to attend and wait upon his person. Devotion to the person of the prince became the highest duty. It was not political slavery, but a religious and sentimental allegiance. So sacred was this allegiance, that only the most detested tyrants were in personal danger of assassination, or those who were objects of religious fanaticism. A king could dismiss his most powerful minister, or his most triumphant general at the head of an army, by a stroke of the pen, or by a word, without expostulation or resistance. To disobey the king was tantamount to defiance of Almighty power. A great general rules by machinery rather than devotion to his person. But devotion to the king needed no support from armies or guards. A king in the seventeenth century was supposed to be the vicegerent of the Deity.

Another still more powerful influence gave stability to the throne of Louis: this was the Catholic Church. Louis was a devout Catholic in spite of his sins, and was true to the interests of the Pope. He was governed, so far as he was governed at all, by Jesuit confessors. He associated on the most intimate terms

with the great prelates and churchmen of the day, like Bossuet, Fénelon, La Chaise, and Le Tellier. He was regular at church and admired good sermons; he was punctilious in all the outward observances of his religion. He detested all rebellion from the spiritual authority of the popes; he hated both heresy and schism. In his devotion to the Catholic Church he was as narrow and intolerant as any ignoramus. His sincerity in defence of the Church was never questioned, and hence all the influences of the Church were exerted to uphold his domination. He may have quarrelled with popes on political grounds, and humiliated them as temporal powers, but he stood by them in the exercise of their spiritual functions. In Louis' reign the State and Church were firmly knit together. It was deemed necessary to be a good Catholic in order to be even a citizen,—so that religion became fashionable, provided it was after the pattern of that of the King and court. Even worldly courtiers entered with interest into the most subtile of theological controversies. But the King always took the side devoted to the Pope, and he hated Jansenism almost as much as he hated Protestantism. Hence the Catholic Church ever rallied to his support.

So, with all these powerful supports Louis began his long reign of seventy-six years,—which technically began when he was four years old, on the death of

his father Louis XIII., in 1643, when the kingdom was governed by his mother, Anne of Austria, as regent, and by Cardinal Mazarin as prime minister. During the minority of the King the humiliation of the nobles continued. Protestantism was only tolerated, and the country distracted rather than impoverished by the civil war of the Fronde. with its intrigues and ever-shifting parties, — a giddy maze, which nobody now cares to unravel; a sort of dance of death, in which figured cardinals, princes, nobles, bishops, judges, and generals, — when "Bacchus, Momus, and Moloch" alternately usurped dominion. Those eighteen years of strife, folly, absurdity, and changing fortunes, when Mazarin was twice compelled to quit the kingdom he governed; when the queen-regent was forced also twice to fly from her capital; when Cardinal De Retz disgraced his exalted post as Archbishop of Paris by the vilest intrigues; when Condé and Conti obscured the lustre of their military laurels; when alternately the parliaments made war on the crown, and the seditious nobles ignobly yielded their functions merely to register royal decrees, — these contests, rivalries, cabals, and follies, ending however in the more solid foundations of absolute royal authority, are not to be here discussed, especially as nobody can thread that political labyrinth; and we begin, therefore, not with the technical reign of the great King, but with his actual

government, which took place on the death of Mazarin, when he was twenty-two.

It is said that when that able ruler passed away so reluctantly from his pictures and his government, the ministers asked of the young King, — thus far only known for his pleasures, — to whom they should now bring their portfolios, "To me," he replied; and from that moment he became the State, and his will the law of the land.

I have already alluded to the talents and capacities of Louis for governing, and the great aid he derived from the labors of Richelieu and the moral sentiments of his age respecting royalty and religion; so I will not dwell on personal defects or virtues, but proceed to show the way in which he executed the task devolved upon him, — in other words, present a brief history of his government, for which he was so well fitted by native talents, fortunate circumstances, and established ideas. I will only say, that never did a monarch enter upon his career with such ample and magnificent opportunities for being a benefactor of his people and of civilization. In his hands were placed all the powers of good and evil; and so far as government can make a nation great, Louis had the means and opportunities beyond those of any monarch in modern times. He had armies and generals and accumulated treasures; and all implicitly served him. His

ministers and his generals were equally able and supple and he was at peace with all the world. Parliaments, nobles, and Huguenots were alike submissive and reverential. He had inherited the experience of Sully, of Richelieu, and of Mazarin. His kingdom was protected by great natural boundaries, — the North Sea, the ocean, the Mediterranean, the Pyrenees, the Alps, and the mountains which overlook the Rhine. By nothing was he fettered but by the decrees of everlasting righteousness. To his praise be it said, he inaugurated his government by selecting Colbert as one of his prime ministers, — the ablest man of his kingdom. It was this honest and astute servant of royalty who ferreted out the peculations of Fouquet, whom Louis did not hesitate to disgrace and punish. The great powers of Fouquet were gradually bestowed on the merchant's son of Rheims.

Colbert was a plebeian and a Protestant, — cold, severe, reserved, awkward, abrupt, and ostentatiously humble, but of inflexible integrity and unrivalled sagacity and forethought; more able as a financier and political economist than any man of his century. It was something for a young, proud, and pleasure-seeking monarch to see and reward the talents of such a man; and Colbert had the tact and wisdom to make his young master believe that all the measures which he pursued originated in the royal brain. His great merit

as a minister consisted in developing the industrial resources of France and providing the King with money.

Colbert was the father of French commerce, and the creator of the French navy. He saw that Flanders was enriched by industry, and England and Holland made powerful by a navy, while Spain and Portugal languished and declined with all their mines of gold and silver. So he built ships of war, and made harbors for them, gave charters to East and West India Companies, planted colonies in India and America, decreed tariffs to protect infant manufactures, gave bounties to all kinds of artisans, encouraged manufacturing industry, and declared war on the whole brood of aristocratic peculators that absorbed the revenues of the kingdom. He established a better system of accounts, compelled all officers to reside at their posts, and reduced the percentage of the collection of the public money. In thirteen years he increased the navy from thirty ships to two hundred and seventy-three, one hundred of which were ships of the line. He prepared a new code of maritime law for the government of the navy, which called out universal admiration. He dug the canal of Languedoc, which united the Mediterranean with the Atlantic Ocean. He instituted the Academies of Sciences, of Inscriptions, of Belles Lettres, of Painting, of Sculpture, of Architecture; and founded

the School of Oriental languages, the Observatory, and the School of Law. He gave pensions to Corneille, Racine, Molière, and other men of genius. He rewarded artists and invited scholars to France; he repaired roads, built bridges, and directed the attention of the middle classes to the accumulation of capital. "He recognized the connection of works of industry with the development of genius. He saw the influence of science in the production of riches; of taste on industry; and the fine arts on manual labor." For all these enlightened measures the King had the credit and the glory; and it certainly redounds to his sagacity that he accepted such wise suggestions, although he mistook them for his own. So to the eyes of Europe Louis at once loomed up as an enlightened monarch; and it would be difficult to rob him of this glory. He indorsed the economical reforms of his great minister, and rewarded merit in all departments, which he was not slow to see. The world extolled this enlightened and fortunate young prince, and saw in him a second Solomon, both for wisdom and magnificence.

Another great genius ably assisted Louis as soon as he turned his attention to war, — the usual employment of ambitious kings, — and this was Le Tellier, Marquis of Louvois, the great war minister, who laid out the campaigns and directed the movements of such generals as Condé, Turenne, and Luxembourg. And here again

it redounds to the sagacity of Louis that he should select a man for so great a post whom he never personally loved, and who in his gusts of passion would almost insult his master. Louvois is acknowledged to have been the ablest war minister that France ever had.

Louis reigned peaceably and prosperously for six years before the ambition of being a conqueror and a hero seized him. At twenty-eight he burned to play the part of Alexander. Thenceforth the history of his reign chiefly pertains to his gigantic wars, — some defensive, but mostly offensive, aggressive, and unprovoked.

In regard to these various wars, which plunged Europe in mourning and rage for nearly fifty years, Louis is generally censured by historians. They were wars of ambition, like those of Alexander and Frederic II., until Europe combined against him and compelled him to act on the defensive. The limits of this lecture necessarily prevent me from describing these wars I can only allude to the most important of them, and then only to show results.

His first great war was simply outrageous, and was an insult to all Europe, and a violation of all international law. In 1667, with an immense army, he undertook the conquest of Flanders, with no better excuse than Frederic II. had for the invasion of Silesia, —

because he wanted an increase of territory. Flanders had done nothing to warrant this outrage, was unprepared for war, and was a weak state, but rich and populous, with fine harbors, and flourishing manufactures. With nearly fifty thousand men, under Condé, Turenne, and Luxembourg, and other generals of note, aided by Louvois, who provided military stores of every kind, and all under the eye of the King himself, full of ideas of glory, the issue of the conflict was not doubtful. In fact, there was no serious defence. It was hopeless from the first. Louis had only to take possession of cities and fortresses which were at his mercy. The frontier towns were mostly without fortifications, so that it took only about two or three days to conquer any city. The campaign was more a court progress than a series of battles. It was a sort of holiday sport for courtiers, like a royal hunt. The conquest of all Flanders might have been the work of a single campaign, for no city offered a stubborn resistance; but the war was prolonged for another year, that Louis might more easily take possession of Franche-Comté, — a poor province, but fertile in soil, well peopled, one hundred and twenty miles in length and sixty in breadth. In less than three weeks this province was added to France. "Louis," said the Spanish council in derision, "might have sent his *valet de chambre* to have taken possession of the country in

his name, and saved himself the trouble of going in person."

This successful raid seems to have contented the King for the time, since Holland made signs of resistance, and a league was forming against him, embracing England, Holland, and Sweden.

The courtiers and flatterers of Louis XIV. called this unheroic seizure "glory." And it doubtless added to the dominion of France, inflamed the people with military ambition, and caused the pride of birth for the first time to yield to military talent and military rank. A marshal became a greater personage than a duke, although a marshal was generally taken from the higher nobility.

Louis paid no apparent penalty for this crime, any more than prosperous wickedness at first usually receives. "His eyes stood out with fatness." To idolatrous courtiers "he had more than heart could wish." But the penalty was to come: law cannot be violated with impunity.

The peace of Aix-la-Chapelle in 1668 followed, which made Louis the most prominent figure in Europe. He was then twenty-nine years of age, in the pride of strength, devoted equally to pleasure and ambition. It was then that he was the lover of the Duchesse de La Vallière, who was soon to be supplanted by the imperious Montespan. Louis remained at peace for

four years, but all the while he was preparing for another war, aimed against Holland, which had offended him because resolved to resist him.

Vaster preparations were made for this war than that against Flanders, five years before. The storm broke out in 1672, when this little state saw itself invaded by one hundred and thirty thousand men, led by the King in person, accompanied by his principal marshals, his war-minister Louvois, and Vauban, to whom was intrusted the direction of siege operations, — an engineer who changed the system of fortifications. This was the most magnificent army that Europe had ever seen since the Crusades, and much was expected of it. Against Condé, Turenne, Luxembourg, and Vauban, all under the eye of the King, with a powerful train of artillery, and immense sums of money to bribe the commanders of garrisons, Holland had only to oppose twenty-five thousand soldiers, under a sickly young man of twenty-two, William, Prince of Orange.

Of course Holland was unable to resist such an overwhelming tide of enemies, such vast and disproportionate forces. City after city and fortress after fortress was compelled to surrender to the generals of the French King. "They were taken almost as soon as they were invested." All the strongholds on the Rhine and Issel fell. The Prince of Orange could not even take the field. Louis crossed the Rhine without difficulty, when

the waters were low, with only four or five hundred horsemen to dispute his passage. This famous passage was the subject of ridiculous panegyrics by both painters and poets. It was generally regarded as a prodigious feat, especially by the people of Paris, as if it were another passage of the Granicus.

Then rapidly fell Arnheim, Nimeguen, Utrecht, and other cities. The wealthy families of Amsterdam prepared to embark in their ships for the East Indies. Nothing remained to complete the conquest of Holland but the surrender of Amsterdam, which still held out. Holland was in despair, and sent ambassadors to the camp of Louis, headed by Grotius, to implore his mercy. He received them, after protracted delays, with blended insolence and arrogance, and demanded, as the conditions of his mercy, that the States should give up all their fortified cities, pay twenty millions of francs, and establish the Catholic religion,—conditions which would have reduced the Hollanders to absolute slavery, morally and politically. From an inspiration of blended patriotism and despair, the Dutch opened their dykes, overflowed the whole country in possession of the enemy, and thus made Amsterdam impregnable,—especially as they were still masters of the sea, and had just dispersed, in a brilliant naval battle under De Ruyter, the combined fleets of France and England.

It was this memorable resistance to vastly superior forces, and readiness to make any sacrifices, which gave immortal fame to William of Orange, and imperishable glory also to the little state over which he ruled. What a spectacle!—a feeble mercantile state, without powerful allies, bracing itself up to a life-and-death struggle with the mightiest potentate of Europe. I know no parallel to it in the history of modern times. Our fathers in the Revolutionary war could retreat to forests and mountains; but Holland had neither mountains nor forests. There was no escape from political ruin but by the inundation of fertile fields, the destruction to an unprecedented degree of private property, and the decimation of the male part of the population. Nor did the noble defenders dream of victory; they only hoped to make a temporary stand. William knew he would be beaten in every battle; his courage was moral rather than physical. He lost no ground by defeat, while Louis lost ground by victory, since it required a large part of his army to guard the prisoners and garrison the fortresses he had taken.

Some military writers say that Louis should have persevered until he had taken Amsterdam. As well might Napoleon have remained in Russia after the conflagration of Moscow. In May, Louis entered Holland; in July, all Europe was in confederacy against him, through the negotiations of the Prince of Orange.

Louis hastened to quit the army when no more conquests could be made in a country overflowed with water, leaving Turenne and Luxembourg to finish the war in Franche-Comté. The able generals of the French king were obliged to evacuate Holland. That little state, by an act of supreme self-sacrifice, saved itself when all seemed lost. I do not read of any military mistakes on the part of the generals of Louis. They were baffled by an unforeseen inundation; and when they were compelled to evacuate the flooded country, the Dutch quietly closed their dykes and pumped the water out again into their canals by their windmills, and again restored fertility to their fields; and by the time Louis was prepared for fresh invasions, a combination existed against him so formidable that he found it politic to make peace. The campaigns of Turenne on the Rhine were indeed successful; but he was killed in an insignificant battle, from a chance cannon-ball, while the Prince of Condé retired forever from military service after the bloody battle of Senif. On the whole, the French were victorious in the terrible battles which followed the evacuation of Holland, and Louis dictated peace to Europe apparently in the midst of victories at Nimeguen, in 1678, after six years of brilliant fighting on both sides.

At the peace of Nimeguen Louis was in the zenith of his glory, as Napoleon was after the peace of Tilsit

He was justly regarded as the mightiest monarch of his age, the greatest king that France had ever seen. All Europe stood in awe of him; and with awe was blended admiration, for his resources were unimpaired, his generals had greatly distinguished themselves, and he had added important provinces to his kingdom, which was also enriched by the internal reforms of Colbert, and made additionally powerful by commerce and a great navy, which had gained brilliant victories over the Dutch and Spanish fleets. Duquesne showed himself to be almost as great a genius in naval warfare as De Ruyter, who was killed off Aosta in 1676. In those happy and prosperous days the Hotel de Ville conferred upon Louis the title of "Great," which posterity never acknowledged. "Titles," says Voltaire, "are never regarded by posterity. The simple name of a man who has performed noble actions impresses on us more respect than all the epithets that can be invented."

After the peace of Nimeguen, in 1678, the King reigned in greater splendor than before. There were no limits to his arrogance and his extravagance. He was a modern Nebuchadnezzar. He claimed to be the state. *L'état, c'est moi!* was his proud exclamation. He would bear no contradiction and no opposition. The absorbing sentiment of his soul seems to have been that France belonged to him, that it had been given to

him as an inheritance, to manage as he pleased for his private gratification. "Self-aggrandizement," he wrote, "is the noblest occupation of kings." Most writers affirm that personal aggrandizement became the law of his life, and that he now began to lose sight of the higher interests and happiness of his people, and to reign not for them but for himself. He became a man of resentments, of caprices, of undisguised selfishness; he became pompous and haughty and self-willed. We palliate his self-exaggeration and pride, on account of the disgraceful flatteries he received on every hand. Never was a man more extravagantly lauded, even by the learned. But had he been half as great as his courtiers made him think, he would not have been so intoxicated; Cæsar or Charlemagne would not thus have lost his intellectual balance. The strongest argument to prove that he was not inherently great, but made apparently so by fortunate circumstances, is his self-deception.

In his arrogance and presumption, like Napoleon after the peace of Tilsit, he now sets aside the rights of other nations, heaps galling insults on independent potentates, and assumes the most arrogant tone in all his relations with his neighbors or subjects. He makes conquests in the midst of peace. He cites the princes of Europe before his councils. He deprives the Elector Palatine and the Elector of Treves of some of their

most valuable seigniories. He begins to persecute the Protestants. He seizes Luxembourg and the principality which belonged to it. He humbles the republic of Genoa, and compels the Doge to come to Versailles to implore his clemency. He treats with haughty insolence the Pope himself, and sends an ambassador to his court on purpose to insult him He even insists on giving an Elector to Cologne.

And the same inflated pride and vanity which led Louis to trample on the rights of other nations, led him into unbounded extravagance in palace-building. Versailles arose, — at a cost, some affirm, of a thousand millions of livres, — unrivalled for magnificence since the fall of the Cæsars. In this vast palace did he live, more after the fashion of an Oriental than an Occidental monarch, having enriched and furnished it with the wonders of the world, surrounded with princes, marshals, nobles, judges, bishops, ambassadors, poets, artists, philosophers, and scholars, all of whom rendered to him perpetual incense. Never was such a grand court seen before on this earth: it was one of the great features of the seventeenth century. There was nothing censurable in collecting all the most distinguished and illustrious people of France around him: they must have formed a superb society, from which the proud monarch could learn much to his enlightenment. But he made them all obsequious courtiers

exacted from all an idolatrous homage, and subjected them to wearisome ceremonials. He took away their intellectual independence; he banished Racine because the poet presumed to write a political tract. He made it difficult to get access to his person; he degraded the highest nobles by menial offices, and insulted the nation by the exaltation of abandoned women, who squandered the revenues of the state in their pleasures and follies, so that this grand court, alike gay and servile, intellectual and demoralized, became the scene of perpetual revels, scandals, and intrigues.

It was at this period that Louis abandoned himself to those adulterous pleasures which have ever disgraced the Bourbons. Yet scarcely a single woman by whom he was for a while enslaved retained her influence, but a succession of mistresses arose, blazed, triumphed, and fell. Mancini, the niece of Mazarin, was forsaken without the decency of the slightest word of consolation. La Vallière, the only woman who probably ever loved him with sincerity and devotion, had but a brief reign, and was doomed to lead a dreary life of thirty-six years in penitence and neglect in a Carmelite convent. Madame de Montespan retained her ascendency longer for she had talents as well as physical beauty; she was the most prodigal and imperious of all the women that ever triumphed over the weakness of man. She reigned when Louis was in all the pride of man

hood and at the summit of his greatness and fame, — accompanying him in his military expeditions, presiding at his fêtes, receiving the incense of nobles, the channel of court favor, the dispenser of honors but not of offices; for amid all the slaveries to which women subjected the proudest man on earth by the force of physical charms, he never gave to them his sceptre. It was not till Madame de Maintenon supplanted this beautiful and brilliant woman in the affections of the King, and until he was a victim of superstitious fears, and had met with great reverses, that state secrets were intrusted to a female friend, — for Madame de Maintenon was never a mistress in the sense that Montespan was.

During this brilliant period of ten years from the peace of Nimeguen, in 1678, to the great uprising of the nations to humble him, in 1688, Versailles and other palaces were completed, works of art adorned the capital, and immortal works of genius made his reign illustrious.

While Colbert lived, I do not read of any extraordinary blunder on the part of the Government. Perhaps palace-building may be considered a mistake, since it diverted the revenues of the kingdom into monuments of royal vanity. But the sums lavished on architects, gardeners, painters, sculptors, and those who worked under them, employed thousands of useful arti-

sans, created taste, and helped to civilize the people. The people profited by the extravagance of the King and his courtiers; the money was spent in France, which was certainly better than if it had been expended in foreign wars; it made Paris and Versailles the most attractive cities of the world; it stimulated all the arts, and did not demoralize the nation. Would this country be poorer, and the government less stable, if five hundred millions were expended at Washington to make it the most beautiful city of the land, and create an honest pride even among the representatives of the West, perhaps diverting them from building another capital on the banks of the Mississippi? Would this country be richer if great capitalists locked up their money in State securities, instead of spending their superfluous wealth in reclaiming sterile tracts and converting them into gardens and parks? The very magnificence of Louis impressed such a people as the French with the idea of his power, and tended to make the government secure, until subsequent wars imposed such excessive taxation as to impoverish the people and drain the sources of national wealth. We do not read that Colbert made serious remonstrances to the palace-building of the King, although afterwards Louis regarded it as one of the errors of his reign.

But when Colbert died, in 1685, another spirit seemed to animate the councils of the King, and great mistakes

were made,—which is the more noteworthy, since the moral character of the King seemed to improve. It was at this time that he fell under the influence of Madame de Maintenon and the Jesuits. They made his court more decorous. Montespan was sent away. Bossuet and La Chaise gained great ascendency over the royal conscience. Louis began to realize his responsibilities; the love of glory waned; the welfare of the people was now considered. Whether he was *ennuied* with pleasure, or saw things in a different light, or felt the influence of the narrow-minded but accomplished and virtuous woman whom he made his wife, or was disturbed by the storm which was gathering in the political horizon, he became more thoughtful and grave, though not less tyrannical.

Yet it was then that he made the most fatal mistake of his life, the evil consequences of which pursued him to his death. He revoked the Edict of Nantes, which Henry IV. had granted, and which had secured religious toleration. This he did from a perverted conscience, wishing to secure the unanimity and triumph of the Catholic faith; to this he was incited by the best woman with whom he was ever brought in intimate relations; in this he was encouraged by all the religious bigots of his kingdom. He committed a monstrous crime that good might come,—not foreseeing the ultimate consequences, and showing anything but an

enlarged statesmanship. This stupid folly alienated his best subjects, and sowed the seeds of revolution in the next reign, and tended to undermine the throne. Richelieu never would have consented to such an insane measure; for this cruel act not only destroyed veneration at home, but created detestation among all enlightened foreigners.

It is a hackneyed saying, that "the blood of martyrs is the seed of the Church." But it would seem that the persecution of the Protestants was an exception to this truth, — and a persecution all the more needless and revolting since the Protestants were not in rebellion against the government, as in the time of Charles IX. This diabolical persecution, justified however by some of the greatest men in France, had its intended results. The bigots who incited that crime had studied well the principles of successful warfare. As early as 1666 the King was urged to suppress the Protestant religion, and long before the Edict of Nantes was revoked the Protestants had been subjected to humiliation and annoyance. If they held places at court, they were required to sell them; if they were advocates, they were forbidden to plead; if they were physicians, they were prevented from visiting patients. They were gradually excluded from appointments in the army and navy; little remained to them except commerce and manufactures. Protestants could not hold Catholics

as servants; soldiers were unjustly quartered upon them; their taxes were multiplied, their petitions were unread. But in 1685 dragonnades subjected them to still greater cruelties; who tore up their linen for camp beds, and emptied their mattresses for litters. The poor, unoffending Protestants filled the prisons, and dyed the scaffolds with their blood. They were prohibited under the severest penalties from the exercise of their religion; their ministers were exiled, their children were baptized in the Catholic faith, their property was confiscated, and all attempts to flee the country were punished by the galleys. Two millions of people were disfranchised; two hundred thousand perished by the executioners, or in prisons, or in the galleys. All who could fly escaped to other countries; and those who escaped were among the most useful citizens, carrying their arts with them to enrich countries at war with France. Some two hundred thousand contrived to fly, — thus weakening the kingdom, and filling Europe with their execrations. Never did a crime have so little justification, and never was a crime followed with severer retribution. Yet Le Tellier, the chancellor, at the age of eighty, thanked God that he was permitted the exalted privilege of affixing the seal of his office to the act before he died. Madame de Maintenon declared that it would cover Louis with glory. Madame de Sévigné said that no royal ordinance had ever been more mag-

nificent. Hardly a protest came from any person of influence in the land, not even from Fénelon. The great Bossuet, at the funeral of Le Tellier, thus broke out: "Let us publish this miracle of our day, and pour out our hearts in praise of the piety of Louis, — this new Constantine, this new Theodosius, this new Charlemagne, through whose hands heresy is no more." The Pope, though at this time hostile to Louis, celebrated a Te Deum.

Among those who fled the kingdom to other lands were nine thousand sailors and twelve thousand soldiers, headed by Marshal Schomberg and Admiral Duquesne, — the best general and the best naval officer that France then had. Other distinguished people transferred their services to foreign courts. The learned Claude, who fled to Holland, gave to the world an eloquent picture of the persecution. Jurieu, by his burning pamphlets, excited the insurrection of Cévennes. Basnage and Rapin, the historians, Saurin the great preacher, Papin the eminent scientist, and other eminent men, all exiles, weakened the supports of Louis. France was impoverished in every way by this "great miracle" of the reign; "so that," says Martin, "the new temple that Louis had pretended to erect to unity fell to ruin as it rose from the ground, and left only an open chasm in place of its foundations. . . . The nothingness of absolute government by one

alone was revealed under the very reign of the great King."

The rebound of the revocation overthrew all the barriers within which Louis had intrenched himself. All the smothered fires of hatred and of vengeance were kindled anew in Holland and in every Protestant country. William of Orange headed the confederation of hostile states that dreaded the ascendency and detested the policy of Louis XIV. All Europe was resolved on the humiliation of a man it both feared and hated. The great war which began in 1688, when William of Orange became King of England on the flight of James II., was not sought by Louis. This war cannot be laid to his military ambition; he provoked it indeed, indirectly, by his arrogance and religious persecutions, but on his part it was as truly defensive as were the wars of Napoleon after the invasion of Russia. Whatever is truly heroic in the character of Louis was seen after he was forty-eight. Whatever claims to greatness he may have had are only to be sustained by the memorable resistance he made to united Europe in arms against him, when his great ministers and his best generals had died. Turenne died in 1675, Colbert in 1683, Condé in 1686, Le Tellier in 1687, and Louvois in 1691. Then it was that his great reverses began, and his glory paled before the sun of the King of England. These reverses may

have been the result of incapacity, and they may have been the result of the combined forces which outnumbered or overmatched his own; certain it is that in the terrible contest to which he was now doomed, he showed great force of character and great fortitude which command our respect.

I cannot enter on that long war which began with the League of Augsburg in 1686, and continued to the peace of Ryswick in 1697, — nine years of desperate fighting, when successes and defeats were nearly balanced, and when the resources of all the contending parties were nearly exhausted. France, at the close of the war, was despoiled of all her conquests and all the additions to her territory made since the Peace of Nimeguen, except Strasburg and Alsace. For the first time since the accession of Richelieu to power, France lost ground.

The interval between this war and that of the Spanish succession — an interval of three years — was only marked by the ascendency of Madame de Maintenon and a renewed persecution, directed not against Protestants, but against those Catholics who cultivated the highest and freest religious life, and in which Bossuet appears to a great disadvantage by the side of his rival, the equally illustrious Fénelon. It was also marked by the gradual disappearance of the great lights in literature. La Fontaine died in 1695. Racine in 1699

Boileau was as good as dead; Mesdames de la Sablière and de la Fayette, Pellisson and Bussy-Rabutin, La Bruyère and Madame Sévigné, all died about this time. The only great men at the close of the century in France who made their genius felt were Bossuet, who encouraged the narrow intolerance which aimed to suppress the Jansenists and Quietists, and Fénelon, who protected them although he did not join them, — the "Eagle of Meaux" and the "Swan of Cambray," as they were called, offering in the realm of art "the eternal duality of strength and grace," like Michael Angelo and Raphael; the one inspiring the fear and the other the love of God, yet both seeing in the Christian religion the highest hopes of the world. The internal history of this period centres around those pious mystics of whom Madame Guyon was the representative, and those inquiring intellectual Jansenists who had defied the Jesuits, but were finally crushed by an intolerant government. The lamentable dispute between Bossuet and Fénelon also then occurred, which led to the disgrace of the latter, — as banishment to his diocese was regarded. But in his exile his moral influence was increased rather than diminished; while the publication of his "Télémaque," made without his consent from a copy that had been abstracted from him, won him France and Europe, though it rendered Louis XIV. forever irreconcilable. Bossuet did not

long survive the banishment of his rival, and died in 1704, a month before Bourdaloue, and two years before Bayle. France intellectually, under the despotic intolerance of the King, was going through an eclipse or hastening to a dissolution, while the material state of the country showed signs of approaching bankruptcy. The people were exhausted by war and taxes, and all the internal improvements which Colbert had stimulated were neglected. "The fisheries of Normandy were ruined, and the pasture lands of Alsace were taken from the peasantry. Picardy lost a twelfth part of its population; many large cities were almost abandoned. In Normandy, out of seven hundred thousand people, there were but fifty thousand who did not sleep on straw. The linen manufactures of Brittany were destroyed by the heavy duties; Touraine lost one-fourth of her population; the silk trade of Tours was ruined; the population of Troyes fell from sixty thousand to twenty thousand; Lyons lost twenty thousand souls since the beginning of the war."

In spite of these calamities the blinded King prepared for another exhausting war, in order to put his grandson on the throne of Spain. This last and most ruinous of all his wars might have been averted if he only could have cast away his ambition and his pride. Humbled and crippled, he yet could not part with the prize which fell to his family by the death of Carlos II. of Spain

But Europe was determined that the Bourbons should not be further aggrandized.

Thus in 1701 war broke out with even intensified animosities, and lasted twelve years; directed on the one part by Marlborough, Eugene, and Heinsius, and on the other part by Villars, Vendôme, and Catinat, during which the finances of France were ruined and the people reduced to frightful misery. It was then that Louis melted up the medallions of his former victories, to provide food for his starving soldiers. He offered immense concessions, which the allies against him rejected. He was obliged to continue the contest with exhausted resources and a saddened soul. He offered Marlborough four millions to use his influence to procure a peace; but this general, venal as he was, preferred ambition to money. The despair which once overwhelmed Holland now overtook France. The French marshals encountered a greater general than William III., whose greatness was in the heroism of his soul and his diplomatic talents, rather than in his genius on the battle-field But Marlborough, who led the allies, never lost a battle, nor besieged a fortress he did not take. His master-stroke was to transfer his operations from Flanders to the Danube. At Blenheim was fought one of the decisive battles of the world, in which the Teutonic nations were marshalled against the French. The battle of Ramillies completed the

deliverance of Flanders; and Louis, completely humiliated, agreed to give up ten Flemish provinces to the Dutch, and to surrender to the Emperor of Germany all that France had gained since the peace of Westphalia in 1648. He also agreed to acknowledge Anne as Queen of Great Britain, and to banish the Pretender from his dominions; England was to retain Gibraltar, and Spain to cede to the Emperor of Germany her possessions in Italy and the Netherlands. But France, with all her disasters, was not ruined; the treaty of Utrecht, 1713, left Louis nearly all his inherited possessions, except in America.

Louis was now seventy-four, — an old man whose delusions were dispelled, and to whom successive misfortunes had brought grief and shame. He was deprived by death of his son and grandson, who gave promise of rare virtues and abilities; only a feeble infant — his great-grandson — was the heir of the monarchy. All his vast enterprises had failed. He suffered, to all appearance, a righteous retribution for his early passion for military glory. "He had invaded the rights of Holland; and Holland gave him no rest until, with the aid of the surrounding monarchies, France was driven to the verge of ruin. He had destroyed the cities of the Palatinate; and the Rhine provinces became a wall of fire against his armies. He had conspired against liberty in England: and it was

from England that he experienced the most fatal opposition." His wars, from which he had expected glory, ended at last in the curtailment of his original possessions. His palaces, which had excited the admiration of Europe, became the monuments of extravagance and folly. His persecutions, by which he hoped to secure religious unity, sowed the seeds of discontent, anarchy, and revolution. He left his kingdom politically weaker than it was when he took it; he entailed nothing but disasters to his heirs. His very grants and pensions were subversive of intellectual dignity and independence. At the close of the seventeenth century the great lights had disappeared; he survived his fame, his generals, his family, and his friends; the infirmities of age oppressed his body, and the agonies of religious fears disturbed his soul. We see no greatness but in his magnificence; we strip him of all claims to genius, and even to enlightened statesmanship, and feel that his undoubted skill in holding the reins of government must be ascribed to the weakness and degradation of his subjects, rather than to his own strength. But the verdicts of the last and present generation of historians, educated with hatred of irresponsible power, may be again reversed, and Louis XIV. may loom up in another age, if not as the *grand monarque* whom his contemporaries worshipped, yet as a man of great natural abilities who made fatal mistakes, and who, like Napoleon after

him, alternately elevated and depressed the nation over which he was called to reign, — not like Napoleon, as a usurper and a fraud, but as an honest, though proud and ambitious, sovereign, who was supposed to rule by divine right, of whom the nations of Europe were jealous, who lived in fear and hatred of his power, and who finally conspired, not to rob him of his throne and confine him to a rock, but to take from him the provinces he had seized and the glory in which he shone.

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LOUIS XV.

A. D. 1710-1774.

REMOTE CAUSES OF REVOLUTION.

LOUIS XV.

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IT is impossible to contemplate the inglorious reign of Louis XV. otherwise than as a more complete development of the egotism which marked the life of his immediate predecessor, and a still more fruitful nursery of those vices and discontents which prepared the way for the French Revolution. It is in fact in connection with that great event that this reign should be considered. The fabric of despotism had already been built by Richelieu, and Louis XIV. had displayed and gloried in its dazzling magnificence, even while he undermined its foundations by his ruinous wars and courtly extravagance. Under Louis XV. we shall see even greater recklessness in profitless expenditures, and more complete abandonment to the pleasures which were purchased by the burdens and sorrows of his people; we shall see the monarch and his court still more subversive of the prosperity and dignity of the nation, and even indifferent to the signs of that coming

storm which, later, overturned the throne of his grandson, Louis XVI.

And Louis XV. was not only the author of new calamities, but the heir of seventy years' misrule. All the evils which resulted from the wars and wasteful extravagance of Louis XIV. became additional perplexities with which he had to contend. But these evils, instead of removing, he only aggravated by follies which surpassed all the excesses of the preceding reign. If I were asked to point out the most efficient though indirect authors of the French Revolution, I would single out those royal tyrants themselves who sat upon the throne of Henry IV. during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. I shall proceed to state the principal events and features which have rendered that reign both noted and ignominious.

In contemplating the long reign of Louis XV., — whom I present as a necessary link in the political history of the eighteenth century, rather than as one of the Beacon Lights of civilization, — we first naturally turn our eyes to the leading external events by which it is marked in history; and we have to observe, in reference to these, that they were generally unpropitious to the greatness and glory of France. Nearly all those which emanated from the government had an unfortunate or disgraceful issue. No success attended the French arms in any quarter of the world,

with the exception of the victories of Marshal Saxe at Fontenoy (1745); and the French lost the reputation they had previously acquired under Henry IV., Condé, Turenne, and Luxembourg. Disgrace attended the generals who were sent against Frederic II., in the Seven Years' War, even greater than what had previously resulted from the contests with the English and the Dutch, and which were brought to a close by the peace of Aix-la-Chapelle, in 1748. But it was not on the fields of Germany that the greatest disasters happened; the French were rifled of their possessions both in America and in India. Louisbourg yielded to the bravery of New England troops, and finally Canada itself was lost. All dreams of establishing a new empire on the Mississippi and the Gulf of St. Lawrence vanished for ever, while Madras and Calcutta fell into the hands of the English, with all the riches of Mahometan and Mogul empires. During the regency of the Duke of Orleans, — for Louis XV. was an infant five years of age when his great-grandfather died in 1715, — we notice the disgraceful speculations which followed the schemes of Law, and which resulted in the ruin of thousands, and the still greater derangement of the national finances. The most respectable part of the reign of Louis XV. were those seventeen years when the administration was in the hands of Cardinal Fleury, who succeeded the Duke of Bourbon, to whom the

reins of government had been intrusted after the death of the Duke of Orleans, two years before the young King had attained his majority. Though the cardinal was a man of peace, was irreproachable in morals, patriotic in his intentions, and succeeded in restoring for a time the credit of the country, still even he only warded off difficulties, — like Sir Robert Walpole, — instead of bravely meeting them before it should be too late. His timid rule was a negative rather than a positive blessing. But with his death ended all prosperity, and the reign of mistresses and infamous favorites began, — the great feature of the times, on which I shall presently speak more fully, as one of the indirect causes of subsequent revolution.

In singling out and generalizing the evils and public misfortunes of the reign of Louis XV., perhaps the derangement of the finances was the most important in its political results. But for this misfortune the King was not wholly responsible: a vast national debt was the legacy of Louis XIV. This was the fruit of his miserable attempt at self-aggrandizement; this was the residuum of his glories. Yet as a national debt, according to some, is no calamity, but rather a blessing, — a chain of loyalty and love to bind the people together in harmonious action and mutual interest, and especially the middle classes, upon whom it chiefly falls, to the support of a glorious throne, — we must not waste time

by dwelling on the existence of this debt, — a peculiarity which has attended the highest triumphs of civilization, an invention of honored statesmen and patriotic ministers, and perhaps their benignant boon to future generations, — but rather we will look to the way it was sought to be discharged.

Louis XIV. spent in wars fifteen hundred millions of livres, and in palaces about three hundred millions more; and his various other expenses, which could not be well defrayed by taxation, swelled the amount due to his creditors, at his death, to nearly two thousand millions, — a vast sum for those times. The regent, Duke of Orleans, who succeeded him, increased this debt still more, especially by his reckless and infamous prodigalities, under the direction of his prime minister, — his old friend and tutor, — Cardinal Dubois. At last his embarrassments were so great that the wheels of government were likely to stop. His friend, the Duc de Saint Simon, one of the great patricians of the court, proposed, as a remedy, national bankruptcy, — affirming that it would be a salutary lesson to the rich plebeian capitalists not to lend their money. An ingenious Scotch financier, however, proposed a more palatable scheme, which was, to make use of the credit of the nation for a bank, the capital of which should be guaranteed by shares in the Mississippi Company. John Law, already a wealthy and prosperous banker, proposed to increase the paper

currency, and supersede the use of gold and silver. His offer was accepted, and his bank became a royal one, its bills going at once into circulation. Now, as the most absurd delusions existed as to the wealth of Louisiana, and the most boundless faith was placed in Law's financiering; and as only Law's bills could purchase shares in the Company which was to make everybody's fortune, — gold and silver flowed to his bank. The shares of the Company continued to rise in value, and bank-bills were indefinitely issued. In a little while (1719), six hundred and forty millions of livres in these bills were in circulation, and soon after nearly half of the national debt was paid off; in other words, people had been induced to exchange government securities, to the amount of eight hundred millions, for the Mississippi stock. They sold consols at Law's bank, and were paid in his bills, with which they bought shares. The bills of the bank were of course redeemable in gold and silver; but for a time nobody wanted gold and silver, so great was the credit of the bank. Moreover, the bank itself was guaranteed by the shares of the Company, which were worth at one period twelve times their original value. John Law, of course, was regarded as a national benefactor. His financiering had saved a nation; and who had ever before heard of a nation being saved by stock-jobbing? All sorts of homage and

honors were showered upon so great a man. His house was thronged with dukes and peers; he became controller-general of the finances, and virtually prime-minister. He was elected a member of the French Academy; his fame extended far and wide, for he was a beneficent deity that had made everybody rich and no one poor. Surely the golden age had come. Paris was crowded with strangers from all parts of the world, who came to see a man whose wisdom surpassed that of Solomon, and who made silver and gold to be as stones in the streets. As everybody had grown rich, twelve hundred new coaches were set up; nothing was seen but new furniture and costly apparel, nothing was felt but universal exhilaration. So great was the delusion, that the stock of the Mississippi Company reached the almost fabulous amount of three thousand six hundred millions, — nearly twice the amount of the national debt. But as Law's bank, where all these transactions were made, revealed none of its transactions, the public were in ignorance of the bills issued and stock created.

At last, the Prince of Conti, — one of the most powerful of the nobles, and a prince of the blood-royal, who had received enormous amounts in bills as the price of his protection, — annoyed to find that his ever-increasing demands were finally resisted, presented his notes at the bank, and of course obtained gold and silver; then other nobles did the same, and then foreign merchants,

until the bank was drained. Then came the panic, then the fall of stocks, then general ruin, then universal despondency and rage. The bubble had burst! Four hundred thousand families, who thought themselves rich, and who had been comfortable, were hopelessly ruined; but the State had got rid of half the national debt, and for a time was clear of embarrassment. The people, however, had been defrauded and deceived by Government, and they rendered in return their secret curses. The foundations of a throne are only secured by the affections of a people; if these are destroyed, one great element of regal power is lost.

Under the administration of Cardinal Fleury (1726–1743) the finances were somewhat improved, since he aimed at economical arrangements, especially in the collection of taxes. He attempted to imitate Sully and Colbert, but without their genius and boldness he effected but little. He had an unfortunate quarrel with the Parliament of Paris, and was obliged to repeal a favorite measure. After his death the country was virtually ruled by the King's mistress, Madame de Pompadour, who displaced ministers at her pleasure, and who encouraged unbounded extravagance. The public deficit increased continually, until it finally amounted to nearly two hundred millions in a single year. In spite of this increasing derangement of the

finances, the court had not the courage or will to face the difficulties, but resorted to new loans and forced contributions, and every form of iniquitous taxation. If a great functionary announced the necessity of economy or order, he was forthwith disgraced. Nothing irritated the court more than any proposal to reduce unnecessary expenses. Nor would any other order, either the nobles or the clergy, consent to make sacrifices.

In such a state of things, a most oppressive system of taxation was the necessary result. In no country in modern times have the burdens of the people been so great. Taxes were imposed to the utmost extent that they were able to bear, without their consent; and upon the slightest resistance or remonstrance they were imprisoned and treated as criminals. So great were the taxes on land, that nearly two-thirds of the whole gross produce, it has been estimated, went to the State, and three-quarters of the remainder to the landlord. The peasant thus only received about one-twelfth of the fruit of his labors; and on this pittance his family was supported. Taxes were both direct and indirect, levied upon every article of consumption, upon everything that was imported or exported, upon income, upon capital, upon the transmission of property, upon even the few privileges which were enjoyed. But not one-half that was collected went to the royal treasury;

it was wasted by the different collectors and sub-collectors. In addition to the ordinary burdens were enormous monopolies, granted to nobles and courtiers, by which the income of the State was indirectly plundered. The poor man groaned amid his heavy labors and great privations, without exciting compassion or securing redress.

And, in addition to his taxes, the laborer was deprived of all the privileges of freedom. He was injured, downtrodden, mocked, and insulted. The laws were unequal, and gave him no security; game of the most destructive kind was permitted to run at large through the fields, and yet the people were not allowed to shoot a hare or a deer upon their own grounds. Numerous edicts prohibited hoeing and weeding, lest young partridges should be destroyed. The people were bound to repair the roads without compensation, to grind their corn at the landlord's mill, bake their bread in his ovens, and carry their grapes to his wine-press. They had not the benefit of schools, or of institutions which would enable them to improve their minds. They could not rise above the miserable condition in which they were born, or even make their complaints heard. Feudalism, in all its social distinctions, and in all its oppressive burdens, crushed them as with an iron weight, or bound them as with iron fetters. This weight they could not throw off, these fetters they

could not break. There was no alternative but in submission, — forced submission to overwhelming taxes, robberies, insults, and injustice, both from landed proprietors and the officers of the crown.

Those, however, who lived upon the unrequited toil of the people lived out of sight of their sorrows, — not in beautiful châteaux, as their ancestors did, by the side of placid rivers and on the skirts of romantic forests, or amid vineyards and olive-groves, but in the capital or the court. Here, like Roman senators of old, they squandered the money which they had obtained by extortion and corruption of every sort. Amid the palaces of Versailles they displayed all the vanities of dress, all the luxuries of their favored life. Here, as lesser stars, they revolved around the great central orb of regal splendor, proud to belong to another world than that in which the plebeian millions toiled and suffered. At Versailles they attempted to ignore their own humanity, to forget their most pressing duties, and to despise the only pursuits which could have elevated their minds or warmed their hearts.

But they were not great feudal nobles, like the Guises and the Epernons, such as combined to awe even regal power under the House of Valois, — men who could coin money and exercise judicial authority in their own domain, — but timid and subservient courtiers, as embarrassed in their affairs as was the King himself

Nevertheless, many of the ancient privileges of feudalism were enjoyed by them. They were exempt from many taxes which oppressed merchants and farmers; they alone were appointed to command in the army and navy; they alone were made prelates and dignitaries in the Church; they were comparatively free from arrest when their crimes were against society and God rather than the government; they were distinguished from the plebeian class by dress as well as by privileges; and they only had access to court and a share in the plunder of the kingdom. Craving greater excitements than that which even Versailles afforded, they built, in the Faubourg St. Germain, those magnificent hotels which are still the dreary but imposing monuments of aristocratic pride; and here they plunged into every form of excess and folly for which Paris has always been distinguished. But it was in their splendid equipages, and in their boxes at the opera, that they displayed the most striking contrast to the habits of the plebeian people with whom they were surrounded. Their embroidered vests, their costly silks and satins, their emerald and diamond buckles, their point-lace ruffles, their rare furs, their jewelled rapiers, and their perfumed handkerchiefs were peculiar to themselves,— for in those days wealthy shopkeepers, and even the daughters of prosperous notaries, could ill afford such luxuries, and were scarcely allowed to

shine in them if they would. A velvet coat then cost more than one thousand francs; while the ruffs and frills, and diamond studs and knee-buckles, and other appendages to the dress of a gentleman, swelled the amount to scarcely less than forty thousand francs, or sixteen hundred louis-d'or. If a distinguished advocate was admitted to the presence of royalty, he must appear in simple black. Gorgeous dresses were reserved only for the *noblesse*, some one hundred and fifty thousand privileged persons; all the rest were *roturiers*, marked by some emblem of meanness or inferiority, whatever might be their intellectual and moral worth. Never were the *noblesse* more enervated; and yet they always appeared in a mock-heroic costume, with swords dangling at their sides, or hats cocked after a military fashion on their heads. As the strength of Samson of old was in his locks, so the degenerate nobles of this period guarded with especial care these masculine ornaments of the person; and so great was the contagion for wigs and hair-powder, that twelve hundred shops existed in Paris to furnish this aristocratic luxury. The muses of Rome in the days of her decline condescended to sing on the arts of cookery and the sublime occupations of hunting and fishing; so in the heroic times of Louis XV. the genius of France soared to comprehend the mysteries of the toilet. One eminent *savant*, in this department of philosophical

wisdom, absolutely published a bulky volume on the *principles* of hair-dressing, and followed it — so highly was it prized — by a no less ponderous supplement. This was the time when the *cuisine* of nobles was as famous as their toilets, and when recipes for different dishes were only equalled in variety by the epigrams of ribald poets. It was a period not merely of degrading follies, but of shameless exposure of them, — when men boasted of their gallantries, and women joked at their own infirmities; and when hypocrisy, if it was ever added to their other vices, only served to make them more ridiculous and unnatural. The rouge with which they painted their faces, and the powder which they sprinkled upon their hair were not used to give them the semblance of youthful beauty, but rather to impart the purple hues of perpetual drunkenness, such as Rubens gave to his Bacchanalian deities, united with the blanched whiteness of premature old age. Licentiousness without shame, drunkenness without rebuke, gambling without honor, and frivolity without wit characterized, alas, a great proportion of that "upper class" who disdained the occupations and sneered at the virtues of industrial life.

But these dissipated courtiers had a model constantly before their eyes, whose more excessive follies it were difficult to rival; and this was the King himself, whom the whole nation was called upon to obey.

If Louis XIV. was a Nebuchadnezzar, unapproachable from pride, Louis XV. was a Sardanapalus in effeminacy and insouciant revelries. The shameless infamies of his life were too revolting to bear more than a passing allusion; and I should blush to tear away the historic veil which covers up his vices from the common eye. I shrink from showing to what depths humanity can sink, even when clothed in imperial purple and seated on the throne of state. The countless memoirs of that wicked age have however, exposed to the indignant eye of posterity the regal debaucheries of Versailles and the pollutions of the Parc aux Cerfs,—that infamous seraglio which cost the State one hundred millions of livres, at the lowest estimate. And this was but a part of the great system of waste and folly. Five hundred millions of the national debt were incurred for expenses too ignominious to be even named. The King, however, was not fond of pomp; it was fatiguing for him to bear, and he generally shut himself from the sight and intercourse of any but convivial friends,—no, not friends, for to absolute monarchs the pleasures of friendship are denied; I should have said, the panderers to his degrading pleasures. Never did the Papal court at Avignon or Rome, even in the worst ages of mediæval darkness, witness more scandalous enormities than those which disgraced the whole reign of Louis XV., either in the days of his minority, when

the kingdom was governed by the Duke of Orleans, or in his latter years, when the Duke of Choiseul was the responsible adviser of the crown. The Palais Royal, the Palais Luxembourg, the Trianon, and Versailles were alternately scenes of excesses which would have disgraced the reigns of the most degenerate of Saracenic caliphs. So vile was the court, that a celebrated countess one day said, at a public festival, that "God, after having formed man, took the mud which was left, and made the souls of princes and footmen."

And the King hated business as much as he hated pomp. Unlike his predecessor, he left everything in the hands of his servants. Nothing wearied him so much as an interview with a minister, or a dispatch from a general. In the society of his mistresses he abnegated his duties as a monarch, and the labors of his life were employed in gratifying their resentments and humoring their caprices. Their complaints were more potent than the suggestions of ministers, or the remonstrances of judges. In idle frivolities his time was passed, neglectful of the great interests which were intrusted to him to guard; and the only attainment of which he was proud was a knack of making tarts and bon-bons, with which he frequently regaled his visitors.

And yet, in spite of these ignoble tastes and pursuits, the King was by no means deficient in natural

abilities. He was much superior to even Louis XIV. in logical acumen and sprightly wit. He was an agreeable companion, and could appreciate every variety of talents. No man in his court perceived more clearly than he the tendency of the writings of philosophers which were then fermenting the germs of revolution. "His sagacity kept him from believing in Voltaire, even when he succeeded in deceiving the King of Prussia." He was favorable to the Jesuits, though he banished them from the realm; perceiving and feeling that they were his true friends and the best supports of his absolute throne, — and yet he banished them from his kingdom. He was hostile too, in his heart, to the very philosophers whom he invited to his table, and knew that they sought to undermine his power. He simply had not the moral energy to carry out the plans of that despotism to which he was devoted. Sensuality ever robs a man of the advantages and gifts which reason gives, even though they may be bestowed to an extraordinary degree. There is no more impotent slavery than that to which the most gifted intellects have been occasionally doomed. Self-indulgence is sure to sap every element of moral strength, and to take away from genius itself all power, except to sharpen the stings of self-reproach. "Louis XV. was not insensible to the dangers which menaced his throne, and would have despoiled the Parliament of the right of remonstrance:

would have imposed on the Jansenists the yoke of Papal supremacy; would have burned the books of the philosophers, and have sent their authors to work out their system within the gloomy dungeons of the Bastille;" but he had not the courage, nor the moral strength, nor the power of will. He was enslaved by his vices, and by those who pandered to them; and he could not act either the king or the man. Seeing the dangers, but feeling his impotence, he affected levity, and exclaimed to his courtiers *Après nous le déluge*, — a prediction which only uncommon sagacity could have prompted. Immersed however in unworthy pleasures, he gave himself not much concern for the future; and this career of self-abandonment continued to the last, even after satiety and *ennui* had deprived the appetites of the power to please. His latter days were of course melancholy, and his miseries resulted as much from the perception of the evils to come as from the failure of the pleasures of sense. A languor, from which he was with difficulty ever roused, oppressed his life. Deaf, incapable of being amused, prematurely worn out with bodily infirmities, hated and despised by the whole nation, he dragged out his sixty-fourth year, and died of the small-pox, which he caught in one of his visits to the Parc aux Cerfs; and his loathsome remains were hastily hurried into a carriage, and deposited in the vaults of St. Denis.

As, however, during this long reign of fifty-eight years, women were the presiding geniuses of the court and the virtual directors of the kingdom, I cannot give a faithful portrait of the times without some allusion, at least, to that woman who was as famous in her day as Madame de Montespan was during the most brilliant period of the reign of Louis XIV. I single out Madame de Pompadour from the crowd of erring and infirm females who bartered away their souls for the temporary honors of Versailles. Not that proud peeress whom she displaced, the Duchesse de Châteauroux; not that low-born and infamous character by whom she was succeeded, Du Barry; not the hundreds of other women who were partners or victims of guilty pleasures, and who descended unlamented and unhonored to their ignominious graves, are here to be alluded to. But Madame de Pompadour is a great historical personage, because with her are identified the fall of the Jesuits in France, the triumph of philosophers and economists, the disgrace of ministers, and the most outrageous prodigality which ever scandalized a nation. Louis XV. was almost wholly directed by this infamous favorite. She named and displaced the controllers-general, and she herself received annually nearly fifteen hundred thousand livres, besides hotels, palaces, and estates. She was allowed to draw bills upon the treasury without specifying the service, and those who incurred

her displeasure were almost sure of being banished from the court and kingdom, and perhaps sentenced, by *lettre de cachet*, to the dreary cells of the Bastille. She virtually had the appointment of the prelates of the Church and of the generals of the army; and so great was her ascendency that all persons, whatsoever their rank, found it expedient to pay their homage to her. Even Montesquieu praised her intellect, and Voltaire her beauty, and Maria Theresa wrote flattering letters to her. The prime minister was her tool and agent, since royalty itself yielded to her sway; even the proud ladies of the royal family condescended to flatter and to honor her. Sprung only from the middle ranks of society, she yet assumed the airs of a princess of the blood.

From her earliest years, long before she was admitted to the court, it had been the dream of this woman to seduce the King. Her father was butcher to the Invalides, and she spent nearly all the money she could command in a costly present to a great duchess, the Princess Conti, in order to be presented. She played high, and won — not a royal heart, but the royal fancy. Her dress, manners, and extraordinary beauty increased the impression she had once before made at a hunting-party; and after the levée she was sent for, and became virtually the minister of the realm. She was unquestionably a woman of great intellect,

as well as of tact and beauty, and even manifested a sympathy with some sorts of intellectual excellence. She was the patroness of artists, philosophers, and poets; but she liked those best who were distinguished for their infidel or licentious speculations. She was the friend of those economists and philosophers who sapped the foundations of the social system. An imperious and insolent hauteur and reckless prodigality were her most marked peculiarities, — just such as were to be expected in an unprincipled woman raised suddenly to high position. In spite of her power, she did not escape the malignant stings of envenomed rivals or anonymous satirists. "She was rallied on the baseness of her origin; she avenged herself by making common cause with those philosophers who overturned the ancient order." She was both mistress and politician, but her politics and alliances subverted the throne which gave her all her glory. Her ascendency of course rested on her power of administering to the tastes and pleasures of the King, and she showed genius in the variety of amusements which she invented. She reigned twenty years, and lost her empire only by death. Madame de Maintenon had maintained her ascendency over Louis XIV. by the exercise of those virtues which extorted his respect, but Madame de Pompadour by the faculty of charming the senses. It was by her that Versailles was enriched with the most precious and

beautiful of its countless wonders. Her own collection of pictures, cameos, antiques, crystals, porcelains, vases, gems, and articles of *vertu* was esteemed the richest and most valuable in the kingdom, and after her death it took six months to dispose of it. Her library was valued at more than a million of francs, and contained some of the rarest manuscripts and most curious books in France. The sums, however, which she spent on literary curiosities or literary men were small compared with the expenses of her toilet, of her *fêtes*, her balls, and her palaces. And all these expenses were open as the day in the eyes of a nation suffering from ruinous taxation, from famine, and the shame of unsuccessful war!

We are impressed with the blind and suicidal measures which all those connected with the throne instigated or encouraged in this reign, — from the King to the most infamous of his mistresses. Whoever pretended to give his aid to the monarchy helped to subvert it by the very measures which he proposed. "The Duke of Orleans, when he patronized Law, gave a shock to the whole economical system of the old régime. When this Scotch financier said to the powerful aristocracy around him, 'Silver is only to you the means of circulation, beyond this it belongs to the country,' he announced the ruin of the glebe and the fall of feudal prejudices. The bankruptcies which

followed the bursting of his bubble weakened the potent charm of the word 'honor,' on which was based the stability of the throne." The courtiers, when they blazed in jewels, in embroidered silks and satins, in sumptuous equipages, and in all the costly ornaments of their times, gave employment and importance to a host of shopkeepers and handicraftsmen, who grew rich, as those who bought of them grew poor. The wealth of bankers, brokers, mercers, jewellers, tailors, and coach-makers dates to these times, — those prosperous and fortunate members of the middle-class who "inhabited the Place Vendôme and the Place des Victoires, as the nobles dwelt in the Rue de Grenelle and the Rue St. Dominique. The nobles ruined themselves by the extravagance into which they were led by the court, and their châteaux and parks fell into the hands of financiers, lawyers, and merchants, who, taking the titles of their new estates, became a parvenu aristocracy which excited the jealousy of the old and divided its ranks." The inferior, but still prosperous class, the shopkeepers, also equally advanced in intelligence and power. In those dark and dingy back-rooms, in which for generations their ancestors had been immured, they now discussed their rights, and retailed the scandals which they heard. They read the sarcasms of the poets and the theories of the new philosophers. Even the tranquillity which succeeded

inglorious war was favorable to the rise of the middle classes; and the Revolution was as much the product of the discontent engendered by social improvements as of the frenzy produced by hunger and despair. The court favored the improvements of Paris, especially those designed for public amusements. The gardens of the Tuileries were embellished, the Champs Elysées planted with trees, and pictures were exhibited in the grand salon of the Louvre. The Théâtre Français, the Royal Opera, the Opéra Comique, and various halls for balls and festivals were then erected, — those fruitful nurseries of future clubs, those poisoned wells of popular education. Nor were charities forgotten with the building of the Pantheon and the extension of the Boulevards. The Hôpital des Enfants-Trouvés allowed mothers, unseen and unheard, to bequeath their children to the State.

There were two events connected with the reign of Madame de Pompadour — I do not say of the King, or his queen, or his ministers, for philosophical history compels us to confine our remarks chiefly to great controlling agencies, whether they be sovereigns or people; to such a man as Peter the Great, when one speaks of a semi-barbarous nation, to ideas, when we describe popular revolutions — which had a great influence in unsettling the kingdom, although brought about in no inconsiderable measure by this unscrupulous mistress

of the King. These were the expulsion of the Jesuits and the triumph of the philosophers.

In regard to the first, I would say, that Madame de Pompadour did not like the Jesuits; not because she believed the accusations against them — that they were the most consistent advocates and friends of despotism in all its forms, intellectual, religious, and political, or the writers of casuistic books, or the perverters of educational instruction, or boastful missionaries in Japan and China, or cunning intriguers in the courts of princes, or artful confessors of the great, or uncompromising despots in the schools, — but because they interfered with her ascendency. It is true she despised their sophistries, ridiculed their pretensions, and detested their government; but her hostility was excited, not because they aspired like her, like the philosophers, like the popes, like the press in our times, to a participation in the government of the world, but because they disputed her claims as one of the powers of the age. The Jesuits were scandalized that such a woman should usurp the reins of state, especially when they perceived that she mocked and defied them; and they therefore refused to pay her court, and even conspired to effect her overthrow. But they had not sufficiently considered the potency of her wrath, or the desperate means of revenge to which she could resort; nor had they considered those other in-

fluences which had been gradually undermining their influence, — even the sarcasms of the Jansenists, the ridicule of the philosophers, and the invectives of the parliaments. Only one or two favoring circumstances were required to kindle the smothered fires of hatred into a blazing flame, and these were furnished by the attempted assassination of the King, in his garden at Versailles, by Damiens the fanatic, and the failure of La Valette the Jesuit banker and merchant at Martinique. Then, when the nation was astounded by their political conspiracies and their commercial gambling, to say nothing of the perversion of their truth, did their arch-enemy, the King's mistress, use her power over the King's minister, her own creature, the Duc de Choiseul, to decree the confiscation of their goods and their banishment from the realm; nay, to induce the Pope himself, in conjunction with the entreaties of all the Bourbon courts of Europe, to take away their charter and suppress their order. The fall of the Jesuits has been already alluded to in another volume, and I will not here enlarge on that singular event brought about by the malice of a woman whom they had ventured to despise. It is easy to account for her hatred and the general indignation of Europe. It is not difficult to understand that the decline of that great body in those virtues which originally elevated them, should be followed by animosities which

would undermine their power. We can see why their moral influence should pass away, even when they were in possession of dignities and honors and wealth. But it is a most singular fact that the Pope himself, with whose interests they were allied, — their natural protector, the head of the hierarchy which they so constantly defended, — should have been made the main agent in their temporary humiliation. Yet Clement XIV. — the weak and timid Ganganelli — was forced to this suicidal act. Old Hildebrand would have fought like a lion and died like a dog, rather than have stooped to such autocrats as the Bourbon princes. A judicial and mysterious blindness, however, was sent upon Clement; his strength for the moment was paralyzed, and he signed the edict which dispersed the best soldiers that sustained the interests of the Church in Europe.

The effect of the suppression of the order in France was both good and ill. The event unquestionably led to the propagation of an impious philosophy and all sorts of crude opinions and ill-digested theories, both in government and religion, in the schools, the salons, and the pulpits of France. The press, relieved of its most watchful and jealous spies, teemed with pamphlets and books of the most licentious character. The good and evil powers were both unchained and suffered to go free about the land, and to do what work they could.

There are many who feel that this combat is necessary for the full development of human strength and virtue; who maintain that the good is much more powerful than the evil in any age of moral experiences; and who believe that angels of light will, on our mundane arena, prevail over angels of darkness,—that one truth is stronger than one thousand lies, and that two can put ten thousand to flight. There are others, again, who think that there is a vitality in error as well as a vitality in truth, as proved seemingly by the prevalence of "many inventions" in fantastic principles and religions. But to whatever party clearness of judgment belongs, one thing is historically certain,—that never was poor human nature more puzzled by false guides, more tempted by appetites and passions, more enslaved by the lust of the eye and the pride of life, than during the latter years of the reign of Louis XV. Never was there a period or a country in Christendom more frivolous, pleasure-seeking, sceptical, irreligious, vain, conceited, and superficial than during the reign of Madame de Pompadour. No; never was there a time of so little moral elevation among the great mass, or when so few great enterprises were projected for the improvement of society.

And it was from society thus disordered, inexperienced, and godless that all restraints were removed from the ancient and venerated guardians of youth,

of religion, and of literature. Judge what must have been the effects; judge between these opposing theories, whether it were better to have the institutions of society guided by able and ambitious, but narrow-minded priests, or to have the flood-gates of vastly preponderating evil influences opened upon society already reeling in the intoxication of the senses, or madly raving from the dethronement of reason, the abnegation of religious duties, and the extinction of the light of faith. I would not say that either one or the other of these unhappy alternatives is necessary or probable in these times, that *we* are compelled to choose between them, or that we ever shall be compelled; but simply, that, in the middle of the eighteenth century, and in France,—that semi-Catholic and semi-infidel nation, —there existed on the one hand a most notable spiritual despotism exercised by the Jesuits, and on the other a boundless ferment of destructive and revolutionary principles, operating on a people generally inclined, and in some cases abandoned, to every folly and vice. This despotism, while it was selfish and unwarrantable, still had in view the guardianship of morals and literature,—to restrain men from crimes by working on their fears; but society, while it sought to free itself from hypocritical and oppressive leaders, also sought to remove all social and moral restraints, and to plunge into reckless and dangerous experiments.

It was a war between these two social powers, — between unlawful despotism and unsanctified license. We are to judge, not which was the better, but which was the worse.

One thing, however, is certain, — that Madame de Pompadour, in whom was centred so much power, threw her influence against the Jesuits, and in favor of those who were not seeking to build up literature and morals on a sure and healthy foundation, but rather secretly and artfully to undermine the whole intellectual and social fabric, under the plea of liberty and human rights. Everybody admits that the writings of the philosophers gave a great impulse to the revolutionary storm which afterwards broke out. Ideas are ever most majestic, whether they are good or evil. Men pass away, but principles are indestructible and of perpetual power. As great and fearful agencies in the period we are contemplating, they are worthy of our notice.

Although the great lights which adorned the literature of the preceding reign no longer shone, — such geniuses as Molière, Boileau, Racine, Fénelon, Bossuet, Pascal, and others, — still the eighteenth century was much more intellectual and inquiring than is generally supposed. Under Louis XIV. intellectual independence had been nearly extinguished. His reign was intellectually and spiritually a gloomy calm between two won-

derful periods of agitation. All acquiesced in his cold heartless, rigid rule, being content to worship him as a deity, or absorbed in the excitements of his wars, or in the sorrows and burdens which those wars brought in their train. But under Louis XV. the people began to meditate on the causes of their miseries, and to indulge in those speculations which stimulated their discontents or appealed to their intellectual pride. Not from La Rochelle, not from the cells of Port Royal, not from remonstrating parliaments did the voices of rebellion come: the genius of Revolution is not so poor as to be obliged to make use of the same class of instruments, or repeat the same experiments, in changing the great aspects of human society. Nor will she allow, if possible, those who guard the fortresses which she wishes to batter down to be suspicious of her combatants. Her warriors are ever disguised and masked, or else concealed within some form of a protecting deity, such as the fabled horse which the doomed Trojans received within their walls. The court of France did not recognize in those plausible philosophers, whose writings had such a charm for cultivated intellect, the miners and sappers of the monarchy. Only one class of royalists understood them, and these were the Jesuits whom the court had exiled. Not even Frederic the Great, when he patronized Voltaire, was aware what an insidious foe was domiciled in his palace,

with all his sycophancy of rank, with all his courtly flattering. In like manner, when the grand seigneurs and noble dames of that aristocratic age wept over the sorrows of the "New Héloïse," or craved that imaginary state of untutored innocence which Rousseau so morbidly described, or admired those brilliant generalizations of laws which Montesquieu had penned, or laughed at the envenomed ironies of Voltaire, or quoted the atheistic doctrines of D'Alembert and Diderot, or enthusiastically discussed the economical theories of Dr. Quesnay and old Marquis Mirabeau, — that stern father of him who, both in his intellectual power and moral deformity, was alike the exponent and the product of the French Revolution, — when the blinded court extolled and diffused the writings of these new apostles of human rights, they little dreamed that they would be still more admired among the people, and bring forth the Brissots, the Condorcets, the Marats, the Dantons, the Robespierres, of the next generation. I would not say that their influence was wholly bad, for in their attacks on the religion and institutions of their country they subverted monstrous usurpations. But whatever was their ultimate influence, they were doubtless among the most efficient agents in overturning the throne; they were, in reality, the secret enemies of those by whom they were patronized and honored. "They cannot, indeed, claim the merit of being the first in

France who opened the eyes of the nation; for Fénelon had taught even to Louis XIV., in his immortal 'Télémaque,' the duties of a king; Racine, in his 'Germanicus,' had shown the accursed nature of irresponsible despotism; Molière, in his 'Tartuffe,' had exposed the vices of priestly hypocrisy; Pascal, in his 'Provincial Letters,' had revealed the wretched sophistries of the Jesuits; Bayle even, in his 'Critical Dictionary,' had furnished materials for future sceptics."

But the hostilities of all these men were united in Voltaire, who in nearly two hundred volumes, and with a fecundity of genius perfectly amazing and unparalleled, in poetry, in history, in criticism, — yet without striking originality or profound speculations, — astonished and delighted his generation. This great and popular writer clothed his attacks on ecclesiastical power, and upon Christianity itself, in the most artistic and attractive language, — clear, simple, logical, without pedantry or ostentation, — and enlivened it with brilliant sarcasms, appealing to popular prejudices, and never soaring beyond popular appreciation. Never did a man have such popularity; never did a famous writer leave so little to posterity which posterity can value.

While Voltaire was indirectly undermining the religious convictions of mankind, the Encyclopedists more directly attacked the sources of religious belief, and openly denied what Voltaire had doubted. But neither

Diderot nor D'Alembert made such shameless assaults as the apostles of a still more atheistic school, — such men as Helvetius and the Baron d'Holbach, who advocated undisguised selfishness, and attributed all virtuous impulses to animal sensation. More dangerous still than these ribald blasphemers were those sentimental and morbid expounders of humanity of whom Rousseau was the type, — a man of more genius perhaps than any I have named, but the most egotistical of that whole generation of dreamers and sensualists who prepared the way for revolution. He was the father of those agitating ideas which spread over Europe and reached America. He gave utterance in his eloquent writings to those mighty watch-words, "Liberty, Fraternity, and Equality," that equally animated Mirabeau, Robespierre, and Jefferson. But the writings of the philosophers will again be alluded to in the next lecture, as among the efficient causes of the French Revolution.

When we contemplate those financial embarrassments which arose from half a century of almost universal war, and those awful burdens which bent to the dust, in suffering and shame, the whole people of a great country; when we consider the absurd and wicked distinctions which separated man from man, and the settled hostility of the clergy of the time to intellectual and social improvement; when we re-

member the unparalleled vices of a licentious court, the ignominious negligence of the government to the happiness and wants of those whom it was its duty to protect, and the shameless insults which an infamous woman was allowed to heap upon the nation; and then when we bear in mind all the elements of disgust, of discontent, of innovation, and of reckless and impious defiance, — can we wonder that a revolution was inevitable, if society is destined to be progressive, and man ever to be allowed to break his fetters?

On that Revolution I cannot enter. I leave the subject as the winds began to howl and the rains began to fall and the floods began to rise, and all together to beat upon that house which was built upon the sand.

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PETER THE GREAT.

A. D. 1672–1725.

HIS SERVICES TO RUSSIA.

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IF I were called upon to name the man who, since Charlemagne, has rendered the greatest services to his country, I should select Peter the Great. I do not say that he is one of the most interesting characters that has shone in the noble constellations of illustrious benefactors whom Europe has produced. Far otherwise: his career is not so interesting to us as that of Hildebrand, or Elizabeth, or Cromwell, or Richelieu, or Gustavus Adolphus, or William III., or Louis XIV., or Frederic II., or others I might mention. I have simply to show an enlightened barbarian toiling for civilization, a sort of Hercules cleansing Augean stables and killing Nemean lions; a man whose labors were prodigious; a very extraordinary man, stained by crimes and cruelties, yet laboring, with a sort of inspired enthusiasm, to raise his country from an abyss of ignorance and brutality. It would be difficult to find a more hard-hearted despot, and yet a more patriotic

sovereign. To me he looms up, even more than Richelieu, as an instrument of Divine Providence. His character appears in a double light, — as benefactor and as tyrant, in order to carry out ends which he deemed useful to his country, and which, we are constrained to admit, did wonderfully contribute to its elevation and political importance.

Peter the Great entered upon his inheritance as absolute sovereign of Russia, when it was an inland and even isolated state, hemmed in and girt around by hostile powers, without access to seas; a vast country indeed, but without a regular standing army on which he could rely, or even a navy, however small. This country was semi-barbarous, more Asiatic than European, occupied by mongrel tribes, living amid snow and morasses and forests, without education, or knowledge of European arts. He left this country, after a turbulent reign, with seaports on the Baltic and the Black seas, with a large and powerfully disciplined army, partially redeemed from barbarism, no longer isolated or unimportant, but a political power which the nations had cause to fear, and which, from the policy he bequeathed, has been increasing in resources from his time to ours. To-day Russia stands out as a first-class power, with the largest army in the world; a menace to Germany, a rival of Great Britain in the extension of conquests to the East,

threatening to seize Turkey and control the Black Sea, and even to take possession of Oriental empires which extend to the Pacific Ocean.

Nobody doubts or questions that the rise of Russia to its present proud and threatening position is chiefly owing to the genius and policy of Peter the Great. Peter was a descendant of a patriarch of the Greek Church in Russia, whose name was Romanoff, and who was his great-grandfather. His grandfather married a near relative of the Czar, and succeeded him by election. His father, Alexis, was an able man, and made war on the Turks.

Peter was a child when his father died, and his half-brother Theodore became the Czar. But Theodore reigned only a short time, and Peter succeeded him at the age of ten (1682), the government remaining in the hands of his half-sister, Sophia, a woman of great ability and intelligence, but intriguing and unscrupulous. She was aided by Prince Galitzin, the ablest statesman of Russia, who held the great office of chancellor. This prince, it would seem, with the aid of the general of the Streltzi (the ancient imperial guards) and the cabals of Sophia, conspired against the life of Peter, then seventeen years of age, inasmuch as he began to manifest extraordinary abilities and a will of his own. But the young Hercules strangled the serpent, — sent Galitzin to Siberia, confined his

sister Sophia in a convent for the rest of her days, and assumed the reins of government himself, although a mere youth, in conjunction with his brother John. That which characterized him was a remarkable precocity, greater than that of anybody of whom I have read. At eighteen he was a man, with a fine physical development and great beauty of form, and entered upon absolute and undisputed power as Czar of Muscovy.

In the years of the regency, when the government was in the hands of his half-sister, he did not give promise of those remarkable abilities and that life of self-control which afterwards marked his career.

In his earlier youth he had been surrounded with seductive pleasures, as Louis XIV. had been, by the queen-regent, with a view to *control* him, not oppose him; and he yielded to these pleasures, and is said to have been a very dissipated young man, with his education neglected. But he no sooner got rid of his sister and her adviser, Galitzin, than he seemed to comprehend at once for what he was raised up. The vast responsibilities of his position pressed upon his mind. To civilize his country, to make it politically powerful, to raise it in the scale of nations, to labor for its good rather than for his own private pleasure, seems to have animated his existence. And this aim he pursued from first to last, like a giant of destiny, without

any regard to losses, or humiliations, or defeats, or obstacles.

Chance, or destiny, or Providence, threw in his path the very person whom he needed as a teacher and a Mentor, — a young gentleman from Geneva, whom historians love to call an adventurer, but who occupied the post of private secretary to the Danish minister. Aristocratic pedants call everybody an adventurer who makes his fortune by his genius and his accomplishments. They called Thomas Becket an adventurer in the time of Henry II., and Thomas Cromwell in the reign of Henry VIII. The young secretary to the Danish minister seems to have been a man of remarkable ability, insight, and powers of fascination, based on his intelligence and on knowledge acquired in the first instance in a mercantile house, — as was the success of Thomas Cromwell and Alexander Hamilton.

It was from this young man, whose name was Lefort, whom Peter casually met at dinner at the house of the Danish envoy, that he was made acquainted with the superior discipline of the troops of France and Germany, and the mercantile greatness of Holland and England, — the two things which he was most anxious to understand; since, as he believed, on the discipline of an army and the efficiency of a navy the political greatness of his country must rest. A disciplined army would render secure the throne of abso-

lutism, and an efficient navy would open and protect his ports for the encouragement of commerce, — one of the great sources of national wealth. Without commerce and free intercourse with other countries no nation could get money; and without money even an absolute monarch could not reign as he would.

So these two young men took counsel together; and the conviction was settled in the minds of each that there could be no military discipline and no efficient military power so long as the Streltzi — those antiquated and turbulent old guards — could depose and set up monarchs. They settled it, and with the enthusiasm of young men, that before they could get rid of these dangerous troops, — only fit for Oriental or barbaric fighting, — they must create a regiment after their own liking, large enough to form the nucleus of a real European army, and yet not large enough to excite jealousy, — for Sophia was then still regent, and the youthful Peter was supposed to be merely amusing himself. The Swiss "adventurer" — one of the most enlightened men of his age, and full of genius — became colonel of this regiment; and Peter, not thinking he knew anything about true military tactics, and wishing to learn, — and not too proud to learn, being born with disdain of conventionalities and precedents, — entered the regiment as drummer, in sight of his own subjects, who perhaps looked upon the act as a

royal freak, — even as Nero practised fiddling, and Commodus archery, before the Roman people. From drummer he rose to the rank of corporal, and from corporal to sergeant, and so on through all the grades.

That is the way Peter began, — as all great men begin, at the foot of the ladder; for great as it was to be born a prince, it was greater to learn how to be a general. In this fantastic conduct we see three things: a remarkable sagacity in detecting the genius of Lefort, a masterly power over his own will, and a willingness to learn anything from anybody able and willing to teach him, — even as a rich and bright young lady, now and then, when about to assume the superintendence of a great household, condescends to study some of the details of a kitchen, those domestic arts on which depend something of that happiness which is the end and aim of married life. Many a promising domestic hearth is wrecked — such is the weakness of human nature — by the ignorance or disdain of humble acquirements, or what seem humble to fortunate women, and yet which are really steps to a proud ascendency.

We trace the ambition of Peter for commercial and maritime greatness also to a very humble beginning. Whether it was a youthful sport, subsequently directed into a great enterprise, or the plodding intention to create a navy and open seaports under his own superintendence, it would be difficult to settle. We may

call this beginning a decree of Providence, an inspiration of genius, or a passion for sailing a boat; the end was the same, as it came about, — the entrance of Russia into the family of European States.

It would seem that one day, by chance, Peter's attention was directed to a little boat laid up on the banks of a canal which ran through his pleasure-grounds. It had been built by a Dutch carpenter for the amusement of his father. This boat had a keel, — a new thing to him, — and attracted his curiosity. Lefort explained to him that it was constructed to sail against the wind. So the carpenter was summoned, with orders to rig the boat and sail it on the Moskva, the river which runs through Moscow. Peter was delighted; and he soon learned to manage it himself. Then a yacht was built, manned by two men, and it was the delight of Peter to take the helm himself. Shortly five other vessels were built to navigate Lake Peipus; and the ambition of Peter was not satisfied until a still larger vessel was procured at Archangel, in which he sailed on a cruise upon the Frozen Ocean. His taste for navigation became a passion; and once again he embarked on the Frozen Ocean in a ship, determined to go through all the gradations of a sailor's life. As he began as drummer in Lefort's regiment, so he first served as a common drudge who swept the cabin in a Dutch vessel; then he rose to the rank of a servant who kept

up the fire and lighted the pipe of the Dutch skipper; then he was advanced to the duty of unfurling and furling the sails, — and so on, until he had mastered the details of a sailor's life.

Why did he condescend to these mean details? The ambition was planted in him to build a navy under his own superintendence. Wherefore a navy, when he had no sea-ports? But he meant to have seaports. He especially needed a fleet on the Volga to keep the Turks and Tartars in awe, and another in the Gulf of Finland to protect his territories from the Swedes. We shall see how subsequently, and in due time, he conquered the Baltic from the Swedes and the Euxine from the Turks. He did not seem to have an ambition for indefinite territorial aggrandizement, but simply to extend his empire to these seas for the purpose of having a free egress and ingress to it by water. He could not Europeanize his empire without seaports, for unless Russia had these, she would remain a barbarous country, a vast Wallachia or Moldavia. The expediency and the necessity of these ports were most obvious. But how was he to get them? Only by war, aggressive war. He would seize what he wanted, since he could attain his end in no other way.

Now, I do not propose to whitewash this enlightened but unscrupulous robber. On no recognized principles of morality can he be defended, any more than can

Louis XIV. for the invasion of Flanders, or Frederic II. for the seizure of Silesia. He first resolved to seize Azof, the main port on the little sea of that name which opens out into the Black Sea, and which belonged to the Turks. It was undoubted robbery; but its possession would be an immense advantage to Russia. Of course, that seizure could not be justified either by the laws of God or the laws of nations. "Thou shalt not steal" is an eternally binding law for nations and for individuals. Peter knew that he had no right to this important city; but at the same time he knew that its possession would benefit Russia. So we are compelled to view this monarch as a robber, taking what was not his, as Ahab seized Naboth's vineyard; but taking it for the benefit of his country, which Ahab did not. He knew it was a political crime, but a crime to advance the civilization of his empire. The only great idea of his life was the welfare of his country, by any means. For his country he would sacrifice his character and public morality. Some might call this an exalted patriotism, — I call it shameless expediency; which seems to have been the creed of politicians, and even of statesmen, for the last three hundred years. All that Peter thought of was *the end*; he cared nothing for the *means*. I wonder why Carlyle or Froude has not bolstered up and defended this great hyperborean giant for doing evil that good may come. Casuistry is in

their line; the defence of scoundrels seems to be their vocation.

Well, then, bear in mind that Peter, feeling that he must have Azof for the good of Russia, irrespective of right or wrong, went straight forward to his end. Of course he knew he must have a fight with Turkey to gain this prize, and he prepared for such a fight. Turkey was not then what it is now, — ripe fruit to be gobbled up by Russia when the rest of Europe permits it; but Turkey then was a great power. At that very time two hundred thousand Turks were besieging Vienna, which would have fallen but for John Sobieski. But obstacles were nothing to Peter; they were simply things to be surmounted, at any sacrifice of time or money or men. So with the ships he had built he sailed down the River Don and attacked Azof. He was foiled, not beaten. He never seemed to know when he was beaten, and he never seemed to care. That hard, iron man marched to his object like a destiny. What he had to do was to take Azof against an army of Turks. So, having failed in the first campaign, through the treachery of one Jacobs who had been employed in the artillery, he tried it again the next year and succeeded, his army being commanded by General Gordon, a Scotchman, while he himself served only as ensign or lieutenant. This port was the key of Palus Mæotis, and opened to him the Black Sea, on which he resolved

to establish a navy. He had now an army modelled after the European fashion, according to the suggestions of Lefort, whose regiment became the model of other regiments. Five thousand men were trained and commanded by General Gordon. Lefort raised another corps of twelve thousand, from the Streltzi chiefly. These were the forces, in conjunction with the navy, with which he reduced Azof. He now returns to Moscow, and receives the congratulations of the boyars, or nobles, — that class who owned the landed property of Russia and cultivated it by serfs. He made heavy contributions on these nobles, and also on the clergy, — for it takes money to carry on a war, and money he must have somehow.

These forced contributions and the changes which were made in the army were not beheld with complacency. The old guard, the Streltzi, were particularly disgusted. The various innovations were very unpopular, especially those made in reference to the dress of the new soldiers. The result of all these innovations and discontents was a conspiracy to take his life; which, however, was seasonably detected and severely punished.

An extraordinary purpose now seized the mind of the Czar, which was to travel in the various countries of Europe, and learn something more especially about ship-building, on which his heart was set. He

also wished to study laws, institutions, sciences, and arts; and in order to study them effectually, he resolved to travel incognito. Hitherto he had not been represented in the European courts; so he appointed an embassy of extraordinary magnificence to proceed in the first instance to Holland, then the foremost mercantile state of Europe. The retinue consisted of four secretaries, at the head of whom was Lefort, twelve nobles, fifty guards, and other persons, — altogether to the number of two hundred. As they travelled through Prussia they were received with great distinction, and the whole journey seems to have been a Bacchanalian progress. There were nothing but *fêtes* and banquets to his honor, and the Russians proved to have great capacity for drinking. At Königsberg he left his semi-barbaric embassy to their revels, and proceeded rapidly and privately to Holland, hired a small room — kitchen and garret — for lodgings, and established himself as journeyman carpenter, with a resolute determination to learn the trade of a ship-carpenter. He dressed like a common carpenter, and lived like one, with great simplicity. When he was not at work in the dock-yard with his broad axe, he amused himself by sailing a yacht, dressed like a Dutch skipper, with a red jacket and white trousers. He was a marked personage, even had it not been known that he was the Czar, — a tall, robust, active man of twenty-five, with a

fierce look and curling brown locks, free from all restraint, seeing but little of the ambassadors who had followed him, and passing his time with ship-builders and merchants, and adhering rigidly to all the regulations of the dock-yards. He spent nine months in this way at hard labor, and at the end of that time had mastered the art of ship-building in all its details, had acquired the Dutch language, and had seen what was worth seeing of Amsterdam,—showing an unbounded curiosity and indefatigable zeal, frequenting the markets and the shops, attending lectures in anatomy and surgery, learning even how to draw teeth; visiting museums and manufactories, holding intercourse with learned men, and making considerable proficiency in civil engineering and the science of fortification. Nothing escaped his eager inquiries. "Wat is dat?" was his perpetual exclamation. "He devoured every morsel of knowledge with unexampled voracity." Never was seen a man on this earth with a more devouring appetite for knowledge of every kind; storing up in his mind everything he saw, with a view of introducing improvements into Russia. To see this barbaric emperor thus going to school, and working with his own hands, insensible to heat and cold and weariness, with the single aim of benefiting his countrymen when he should return, is to me one of the most wonderful sights of history.

His chosen companion in these labors and visits and pleasures was also one of the most remarkable men of his age. His name was Mentchikof, — originally a seller of pies in the streets of Moscow, who attracted, by his beauty and brightness, the attention of General Lefort, and was made a page in his household, and was as such made known to the Czar, who took a fancy to him, and soon detected his great talents; so that he rose as rapidly as Joseph did in the court of Pharaoh, and became general, governor, prince, regent, with almost autocratic power. The whole subsequent reign of Peter, and of his successor, became identified with Prince Mentchikof, who was prime minister and grand vizier, and who forwarded all the schemes of his master with consummate ability.

After leaving Holland, Peter accepted an invitation of William III. to visit England, and thither he went with his embassy in royal ships, yet still affecting to travel as a private gentleman. He would accept no honors, no public receptions, no state banquets. He came to England, not to receive honors, but to add to his knowledge, and he wished to remain unfettered in his sight-seeing. In England, the same insatiable curiosity marked him as in Holland. He visits the dockyards, and goes to the theatre and the opera, and holds interviews with Quakers and attends their meetings, as well as the churches of the Establishment. The coun-

try-houses of nobles, with their parks and gardens and hedges, filled him with admiration. He was also greatly struck with Greenwich Hospital, which looked to him like a royal palace (as it was originally), and he greatly wondered that the old seedy and frowsy pensioners should be lodged so magnificently. The courts of Westminster surprised him. "Why," said he, in reference to the legal gentlemen in wigs and gowns, "I have but two lawyers in my dominions, and one of them I mean to hang as soon as I return." But while he visited everything, generally in a quiet way, avoiding display and publicity, he was most interested in mechanical inventions and the dock-yards and mock naval combats. It would seem that his private life was simple, although he is accused of eating voraciously, and of drinking great quantities of brandy and sack. If this be true, he certainly reformed his habits, and learned to govern himself, for he was very temperate in his latter days Men who are very active and perform herculean labors, do not generally belong to the class of gluttons or drunkards. I have read of but few great generals, like Cæsar, or Charlemagne, or William III., or Gustavus Adolphus, or Marlborough, or Cromwell, or Turenne, or Wellington, or Napoleon, who were not temperate in their habits.

After leaving England, the Czar repaired to Vienna, *via* Holland, sending to Russia five hundred persons

whom he took in his employ, — navy captains, pilots, surgeons, gunners, boat-builders, blacksmiths, and various other mechanics, — having an eye to the industrial development of his country; which was certainly better than driving out of his kingdom four hundred thousand honest people, as Louis XIV. did because they were Protestants. But Peter did not tarry long in Vienna, whose military establishments he came to study, being compelled to return hastily to Moscow to suppress a rebellion. He returned a much wiser man; I doubt if any person ever was more improved than he by his travels. What an example to tourists in these times! All travelling (except explorations) is a dissipation and waste of time unless self-improvement is the main object. Pleasure-seeking is the greatest vanity on this earth, for he who *seeks* pleasure never finds it; but it comes when it is a minor consideration.

The apprenticeship of Peter is now completed, and he enters more seriously upon those great labors which have given him an immortality. I am compelled to be brief in stating them.

The first thing he did, on his return, was finally to crush the Streltzi, who fomented treasons and were hostile to reform. He had wisely left General Gordon at Moscow with six thousand soldiers, disciplined after the European fashion. In abolishing the turbulent and prejudicial Streltzi, he is accused of great cruel-

ties. He summarily executed or imprisoned some four thousand of them caught in acts of treason and rebellion, and drafted the rest into distant regiments. He may have been unnecessarily cruel, as critics have accused Oliver Cromwell of being in his treatment of the Irish. But, cruel or not, he got rid of troops he could not trust, and organized soldiers whom he could, — for he must have tools to work with if he would do his work. I neither praise nor condemn his mode of working; I seek to show how he performed his task.

After disbanding rebellious soldiers, he sought to make his army more efficient by changing the dress of the entire army. He did away with the long coat reaching to the heels, something like that which ladies wear in rainy days; and the drawers not unlike petticoats; and the long, bushy beards. He found more difficulty in making this reform than in taking Azof, although aided by Mentchikof, his favorite, fellow-traveller, and prime minister. He was not content with cutting off the beards of the soldiers and shortening their coats, — he wished to make private citizens do the same; but the uproar and discontent were so great that he was obliged to compromise the matter, and allow the citizens to wear their beards and robes on condition of a heavy tax, graded on ability to pay it. The only class he exempted from the tax were the clergy and the serfs.

Among other reforms he changed the calendar, making the year to begin with January, and abolished the old laws with reference to marriage, by which young people had no power of choice; but he decreed that no marriage should take place unless an intimacy had existed between the parties for at least six months. He instituted balls and assemblies, to soften the manners of the people. He encouraged the theatre, protected science, invited eminent men to settle in Russia, improved the courts of justice, established posts and post-offices, boards of trade, a vigorous police, hospitals, and alms-houses. He imported Saxony sheep, erected linen, woollen, and paper mills, dug canals, suppressed gambling, and fostered industry and art. He aimed to do for Russia what Richelieu and Colbert did for France.

The greatest opposition to his reforms came from the clergy, with the Patriarch at their head, — a personage of great dignity and power, ruling an *imperium in imperio*. Peter had no hostility to the Greek religion, nor to the clergy. Like Charlemagne, he was himself descended from an ecclesiastical family. But finding the clergy hostile to civil and social reforms, he sought to change the organization of the Church itself. He did not interfere with doctrines, nor discipline, nor rites, nor forms of worship; but he unseated the Patriarch, and appointed instead a consistory, the members of which were nom-

inated by himself. Like Henry VIII., he virtually made himself the head of the Church, — that is, the supreme direction of ecclesiastical affairs was given to those whom he controlled, and not to the Patriarch, whose power had been supreme in religious matters, — more than Papal, almost Druidical. In former reigns the Patriarch had the power of life and death in his own tribunals; and when he rode to church on Palm Sunday, in his emblazoned robes, the Czar walked uncovered at his side, and held the bridle of his mule. It is a mark of the extraordinary power of Peter that he was enabled to abolish this great dignity without a revolution or bloodshed; and he not only abolished the patriarchal dignity, but he seized the revenues of the Patriarch, taxed the clergy, and partially suppressed monasteries, decreeing that no one should enter them under fifty years of age; yea, he even decreed universal toleration of religion, except to the Jesuits, whom he hated, as did William III. and Frederic II. He caused the Bible to be translated into the Slavonic language, and freely circulated it. And he prosecuted these reforms while he was meditating, or was engaged in, great military enterprises.

I approach now the great external event of Peter's life, his war with Charles XII., brought about in part by his eagerness to get a seaport on the Baltic, and in part by the mad ambition of the Swedish king, determined

to play the part of Alexander. The aggressive party in this war, however, was Peter. He was resolved to take part of the Swedish territories for mercantile and maritime purposes; so he invaded Sweden with sixty thousand men. Charles, whose military genius was not appreciated by the Czar, had only eight thousand troops to oppose the invasion; but they were veterans, and fought on the defensive, and had right on their side. This latter is a greater thing in war than is generally supposed; for although war is in our own times a mechanism in a great measure, still moral considerations underlie even physical forces, and give a sort of courage which is hard to resist. The result of this invasion was the battle of Narva, when Peter was disgracefully beaten, as he ought to have been. But he bore his defeat complacently. He is reported as saying that he knew the Swedes would have the advantage at first, but that they would teach him how to beat them at last. I doubt this. I do not believe a general ever went into battle with a vastly overwhelming force when he did not expect victory. But the great victory won by Charles (a mere stripling king, scarcely nineteen) turned his head. Never was there a more intoxicated hero. He turned his victorious army upon Poland, dethroned the king, invaded Saxony, and prepared to invade Russia with an army of eighty thousand troops. His cool adversary, who since his defeat

at Narva had been prosecuting his reforms and reorganizing his army and building a navy, was more of a wily statesman than a successful general. He retreated before Charles, avoided battles, tempted him in the pursuit to dreary and sparsely inhabited districts, decoyed him into provinces remote from his base of supplies; so that at the approach of winter Charles found himself in a cold and desolate country (as Napoleon was afterwards tempted to *his* ruin), with his army dwindled down to twenty-five thousand men, while Peter had one hundred thousand, with ample provisions and military stores. The generals of Charles now implore him to return to Sweden, at least to seek winter quarters in the Ukraine; but the monarch, infatuated, lays siege to Pultowa, and gives battle to Peter, and is not only defeated, but his forces are almost annihilated, so that he finds the greatest difficulty in escaping into Turkey with a handful of followers. That battle settled the fortunes of both Charles and Peter. The one was hopelessly ruined; the other was left free to take as much territory from Sweden as he wished, to open his seaports on the Baltic, and to dig canals from river to river.

But another enemy still remained, Turkey; who sought to recover her territory on the Black Sea, and who had already declared war. Flushed with conquest, Peter in his turn became rash He advanced to the

Turkish territory with forty thousand men, and was led into the same trap which proved the ruin of Charles XII. He suddenly finds himself in a hostile country, beyond the Pruth, between an army of Turks and an army of Tartars, with a deep and rapid river in his rear. Two hundred thousand men attack his forty thousand. He cannot advance, he cannot retreat; he is threatened with annihilation. He is driven to despair. Neither he nor his generals can see any escape, for in three days he has lost twenty thousand men,—one half his army. In all probability he and his remaining men will be captured, and he conducted as a prisoner to Constantinople, and perhaps be shown to the mocking and jeering people in a cage, as Bajazet was. In this crisis he shuts himself up in his tent, and refuses to see anybody.

He is saved by a woman, and a great woman, even Catherine his wife, who originally was a poor peasant girl in Livonia, and who after various adventures became the wife of a young Swedish officer killed at the battle of Marienburg, and then the mistress of Prince Mentchikof, and then of Peter himself, who at length married her, —"an incident," says Voltaire, "which fortune and merit never before produced in the annals of the world." She suggested negotiation, when Peter was in the very jaws of destruction, and which nobody had thought of. She collects together her jewels and all the valuables she

can find, and sends them to the Turkish general as a present, and favorable terms are secured. But Peter loses Azof, and is shut out from the Black Sea, and is compelled to withdraw from the vicinity of the Danube. The Baltic is however still open to him; and in the mean time he has transferred his capital to a new city, which he built on the Gulf of Finland.

It was during his Swedish war, about the year 1702, when he had driven the Swedes from Ladoga and the Neva, that he fixed his eyes upon a miserable morass, a delta, half under water, formed by the dividing branches of the Neva, as the future seat of his vast empire. It was a poor site for a capital city, inaccessible by water half the year, without stones, without wood, without any building materials, with a barren soil, and liable to be submerged in a storm. Some would say it was an immense mistake to select such a place for the capital of an empire stretching even to the Pacific ocean. But it was the only place he could get which opened a water communication with Western Europe. He could not Europeanize his empire without some such location for his new capital. So St. Petersburg arose above the marshes of the Neva as if by magic, built in a year, on piles, although it cost him the lives of one hundred thousand men. "We never could look on this capital," says Motley, "with its imposing though monotonous architecture, its colossal squares, its vast

colonnades, its endless vistas, its spires and minarets sheathed in barbaric gold and flashing in the sun, and remember the magical rapidity with which it was built, without recalling Milton's description of Pandemonium:—

> "'As bees
> In spring time, when the sun with Taurus rides,
> Pour forth their populous youth about the hive
> In clusters: they among fresh dews and flowers
> Fly to and fro, or on the smoothed plank,
> The suburb of their straw-built citadel,
> Now rubbed with balm, expatiate, and confer
> Their state affairs: so thick the aery crowd
> Swarm'd and were straighten'd; till, the signal given,
> Behold a wonder!'

"The transfer of the seat of government, by the removal of the senate from Moscow, was effected a few years afterwards. Since that time, the repudiated Oriental capital of the ancient Czars, with her golden tiara and Eastern robe, has sat, like Hagar in the wilderness, deserted and lonely in all her barbarian beauty. Yet even now, in many a backward look and longing sigh, she reads plainly enough that she is not forgotten by her sovereign, that she is still at heart preferred, and that she will eventually triumph over her usurping and artificial rival."

So writes a great historian; but to me it seems that the longing eyes of the Emperor of Russia are not

turned to the old barbaric capital, but to a still more ancient capital, — that which Constantine, with far-seeing vision, selected as the central city of the decaying empire of the Romans, easily defended, resting on both Europe and Asia, with access to the Mediterranean and Black seas; the most magnificent site for the capital of a great empire on the face of the globe, which is needed by Russia if she is to preserve her maritime power, and which nothing but the jealousy of the Western nations has prevented her from twice seizing within a single generation. We say, "Westward, the star of empire takes its way." But an empire larger in its territories than all Europe, and constantly augmenting its resources, although still Cossack, still undeveloped, has its eye on Eastern, not Western extension, until China herself, with her four thousand years of civilization and her four hundred millions of people, may become a spoil to be divided between the Emperor of Russia and the Empress of India; not as banded and united robbers divide their spoil, but the one encroaching from the West and North, and the other from the West and South.

Peter, after having realized the great objects to which he early aspired, after having founded a navy and reorganized his army, and added provinces to his empire, and partially civilized it, and given to it a new capital, now meditated a second tour of Europe, this

time to be accompanied by his wife. Thirteen years had elapsed since he worked as a ship-carpenter in the dockyards of Holland. He was now forty-three years old, still manly, vigorous, and inquiring. In 1715, just as Louis had completed his brilliant and yet unfortunate career, Peter first revisited the scene of his early labors, where he was enthusiastically received, and was afterwards entertained with great distinction at Paris. He continued his studies in art, in science, and laws, saw everything, and was particularly impressed with the tomb of Richelieu. "Great man!" apostrophizes the Czar, "I would give half of my kingdom to learn from thee how to govern the other half." Such remarks indicate that he knew something of history, and comprehended the mission of the great cardinal, — which was to establish absolutism as one of the needed forces of the seventeenth century; for it was Richelieu, hateful as is his character, who built up the French monarchy.

From Paris, Peter proceeded to Berlin, where he was received with equal attentions. He inspired universal respect, although his aspect was fierce, his habits rough, and his manners uncouth. The one thing which marked him as a great man was his force of character. He was undazzled and unseduced; plain, simple, temperate, self-possessed, and straightforward. He had not worked for himself, but for his country, and everybody knew it. His wife Catherine, also a great woman, did not make

so good an impression as he did, being fat, vulgar, and covered with jewels and orders and crosses. I suppose both of them were what we now should call "plain people." Station, power, and wealth seem to have very little effect on the manners and habits of those who have arisen by extraordinary talents to an exalted position. Nor does this position develop pride as much as is generally supposed. Pride is born in a man, and will appear if he is ever so lowly; as also vanity, the more amiable quality, which expends itself in hospitalities and ostentations. The proud Gladstone dresses like a Methodist minister, and does not seem to care what kind of a hat he wears. The vain Beaconsfield loved honors and stars and flatteries and aristocratic insignia: if he had been rich he would have been prodigal, and given great banquets. Peter made no display, and saved his money for useful purposes. It would seem that most of the Russian monarchs have retained simplicity in their private lives.

The closing years of Peter were saddened by a great tragedy, as were those of David. Both these monarchs had the misfortune to have rebellious and unworthy sons, who were heirs to the throne. Alexis was as great a trial to Peter as Absalom was to David. He was hostile to reforms, was in league with his father's enemies, and was hopelessly stupid and profligate. He was not vain, ambitious, and beautiful, like the son of

David; but coarse, in bondage to priests, fond of the society of the weak and dissipated, and utterly unfitted to rule an empire. Had he succeeded Peter, the life-work of Peter would have been wasted. His reign would have been as disastrous to Russia as that of Mary Queen of Scots would have been to England, had she succeeded Elizabeth. The patience of the father was at last exhausted. He had remonstrated and threatened to no purpose. The young man would not reform his habits, or abstain from dangerous intrigues. He got beastly drunk with convivial friends, and robbed and cheated his father whenever he got a chance.

What was Peter to do with such a rebellious, undutiful, profligate, silly youth as Alexis, — a sot, a bigot and a liar? Should he leave to him the work of carrying out his policy and aims? It would be weakness and madness. It seemed to him that he had nothing to do but disinherit him. In so doing, he would render no injustice. Alexis had no claim to the throne, like the eldest son of Victoria. The throne belonged to Peter. He had no fetters on him like a feudal sovereign; he could elect whom he pleased to inherit his vast empire. It was not his son he loved best, but his country. He had the right to appoint any successor he pleased, and he would naturally select one who would carry out his plans and rule ably. So he dis-

inherited his eldest son Alexis, and did it in virtue of the power which he imagined he had received, like an old Jewish patriarch, from God Almighty. There was no law of Russia designating the eldest son as the Czar's successor. No one can reasonably blame Peter for disinheriting this worthless son, whom he had ceased to love, — whom he even despised.

Having disinherited him, out of regard to public interests more than personal dislike, the question arises, what shall he do with him? Shall he shut him in a state-prison, or confine him to a convent, or make way with him? One of these terrible alternatives he must take. What struggles of his soul to decide which were best! We pity a man compelled to make such a choice, Any choice was bad, and full of perils and calumnies. Whatever way he turned was full of obstacles. If he should shut him up, the priests and humiliated boyars and other intriguing rascals might make him emperor after Peter's death, and thus create a counter reformation, and upset the work of Peter's life. If he should make way with Alexis, the curses of his enemies and the execrations of Europe and posterity would follow him as an unnatural father. David, with his tender nature and deep affection, would have spared Absalom if all the hosts of Israel had fallen and his throne were overturned. But Peter was not so weak as David; he was stern and severe. He decided to bring his son to

trial for conspiracy and rebellion. The court found him guilty. The ministers, generals, and senators of the empire pronounced sentence of death upon him. Would the father have used his prerogative and pardoned him? That we can never know. Some think that Peter did not intend to execute the sentence. At any rate, he was mercifully delivered from his dilemma. Alexis, frightened and apparently contrite, was seized with a fit of apoplexy, and died imploring his father's pardon.

This tragedy is regarded as the great stain on the reign of Peter. It shocked the civilized world. I do not wish to exculpate Peter from cruelty or hard-heartedness; I would neither justify him nor condemn him. In this matter, I think, he is to be judged by the supreme tribunal of Heaven. I do not know enough to acquit or condemn him. All I know is, that his treatment of his son was both a misfortune and a stain on his memory. The people to decide this point are those rich fathers who have rebellious, prodigal, reckless, and worthless sons, hopelessly dissipated, and rendered imbecile by self-indulgence and wasteful revels; or those people who discuss the expediency and apparent state necessity for the execution of Mary, Queen of Scots, when the welfare of a great kingdom was set against the ties of blood.

After the death of Alexis, a few more years are given to the Czar to follow out his improvements.

centralize his throne, and extend his territories both on the Baltic and in the East. The death of Charles XII. enabled him to take what Swedish provinces he needed to protect his mercantile interests, and to snatch from Persia the southern coast of the Caspian, — the original kingdom of Cyrus. "It is not land I want," said he, "but water." This is the key to all his conquests. He wanted an outlet to the sea, on both sides his empire. He did not aim at territorial enlargement so much as at facilities to enrich and civilize his empire.

Having done his work, — the work, I think, for which he was raised up, — he sets about the succession to his throne. Amid unprecedented pomp he celebrates the coronation of his faithful and devoted wife, to whom he also has been faithful. It is she only who understands and can carry out his imperial policy. He himself at Moscow, 1724, amid unusual solemnities, placed the imperial crown upon her brow, and proudly and yet humbly walked before her in the gorgeous procession as a captain of her guard. Before all the great dignitaries of his empire he gives the following reasons for his course: —

"The Empress Catherine, our dearest consort, was an important help to us in all our dangers, not in war alone, but in other expeditions in which she voluntarily accompanied us; serving us with her able counsel, notwithstanding the

natural weakness of her sex, more particularly at the battle of Pruth, when our army was reduced to twenty-two thousand men, while the Turks were two hundred thousand strong. It was in this desperate condition, above all others, that she signalized her zeal by a courage superior to her sex. For which reasons, and in virtue of that power which God has given us, we thus honor our spouse with the imperial crown."

Peter died in the following year, after a reign of more than forty years, bequeathing a centralized empire to his successors, a large and disciplined army, a respectable navy, and many improvements in agriculture, manufactures, commerce, and the arts, — yea, schools and universities for the education of the higher classes.

Whatever may have been the faults of Peter, history cannot accuse him of ingratitude, or insincerity, or weak affections, — nothing of which is seen in his treatment of the honest Dutchman, in whose yard he worked as a common laborer; of Lefort, whom he made admiral of his fleet; or of Mentchikof, whom he elevated to the second place in his empire. Peter was not a great warrior, but he created armies. He had traits in common with barbarians, but he bequeathed a new civilization, and dispelled the night of hereditary darkness. He owed nothing to art; he looms up as a prodigy of Nature. He cared nothing for public opinion; he left the moral influence of a

great example. He began with no particular aim except to join his country to the sea; he bequeathed a policy of indefinite expansion. He did not leave free institutions, for his country was not prepared for them; but he animated thirty millions with an intense and religious loyalty. He did not emancipate serfs; but he bequeathed a power which enabled his successors to loosen fetters with safety. He degraded nobles; but his nobles would have prevented if they could the emancipation of the people. He may have wasted his energies in condescending to mean details, and insisting on doing everything with his own hands, from drummer to general, and cabin-boy to admiral, winning battles with his own sword, and singing in the choir as head of the Church; but in so doing he made the mistake of Charlemagne, whom he strikingly resembles in his iron will, his herculean energies, and his enlightened mind. He could not convert his subjects from cattle into men, even had he wished, for civilization is a long and tedious process; but he made them the subjects of a great empire, destined to spread from sea to sea. Certainly he was in advance of his people; he broke away from the ideas which enslaved them. He may have been despotic, and inexorable, and hard-hearted; but that was just such a man as his country needed for a ruler. Mr. Motley likens him to "a huge engine, placed upon the

earth to effect a certain task, working its mighty arms night and day with ceaseless and untiring energy, crashing through all obstacles, and annihilating everything in its path with the unfeeling precision of gigantic mechanism." I should say he was an instrument of Almighty power to bring good out of evil, and prepare the way for a civilization the higher elements of which he did not understand, and with which he would not probably have sympathized.

Who shall say, as we survey his mighty labors, and the indomitable energy and genius which inspired them, that he does not deserve the title which civilization has accorded to him, — yea, a higher title than that of Great, even that of Father of his country?

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In 1708, marking its mighty arms

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would not probably have sympathized.

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FREDERIC THE GREAT.

A. D. 1712–1786.

THE PRUSSIAN POWER.

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THE history of Frederic the Great is simply that of a man who committed an outrageous crime, the consequences of which pursued him in the maledictions and hostilities of Europe, and who fought bravely and heroically to rescue himself and country from the ruin which impended over him as a consequence of this crime. His heroism, his fertility of resources, his unflagging energy, and his amazing genius in overcoming difficulties won for him the admiration of that class who idolize strength and success; so that he stands out in history as a struggling gladiator who baffled all his foes, — not a dying gladiator on the arena of a pagan amphitheatre, but more like a Judas Maccabæus, when hunted by the Syrian hosts, rising victorious, and laying the foundation of a powerful monarchy; indeed, his fame spread, irrespective of his cause and character, from one end of Christendom to the other, — not such a fame as endeared Gustavus Adolphus to the heart of

nations for heroic efforts to save the Protestant religion, — but such a fame as the successful generals of ancient Rome won by adding territories to a warlike State, regardless of all the principles of right and wrong. Such a career is suggestive of grand moral lessons; and it is to teach these lessons that I describe a character for whom I confess I feel but little sympathy, yet whom I am compelled to respect for his heroic qualities and great abilities.

Frederic of Prussia was born in 1712, and had an unhappy childhood and youth from the caprices of a royal but disagreeable father, best known for his tall regiment of guards; a severe, austere, prejudiced, formal, narrow, and hypochondriacal old Pharisee, whose sole redeeming excellence was an avowed belief in God Almighty and in the orthodox doctrines of the Protestant Church.

In 1740, this rigid, exacting, unsympathetic king died; and his son Frederic, who had been subjected to the severest discipline, restraints, annoyances, and humiliations, ascended the throne, and became the third King of Prussia, at the age of twenty-eight. His kingdom was a small one, being then about one quarter of its present size.

And here we pause for a moment to give a glance at the age in which he lived, — an age of great reactions, when the stirring themes and issues of the seventeenth

century were substituted for mockeries, levities, and infidelities; when no fierce protests were made except those of Voltaire against the Jesuits; when an abandoned woman ruled France, as the mistress of an enervated monarch; when Spain and Italy were sunk in lethargic forgetfulness, Austria was priest-ridden, and England was governed by a ring of selfish landed proprietors; when there was no marked enterprise but the slave-trade; when no department of literature or science was adorned by original genius; and when England had no broader statesman than Walpole, no abler churchman than Warburton, no greater poet than Pope. There was a general indifference to lofty speculation. A materialistic philosophy was in fashion,—not openly atheistic, but arrogant and pretentious, whose only power was in sarcasm and mockery, like the satires of Lucian, extinguishing faith, godless and yet boastful, —an Epicureanism such as Socrates attacked and Paul rebuked. It found its greatest exponent in Voltaire, the oracle and idol of intellectual Europe. In short, it was an age when general cynicism and reckless abandonment to pleasure marked the upper-classes; an age which produced Chesterfield, as godless a man as Voltaire himself.

In this period of religious infidelity, moral torpor, fashionable mediocrity, unthinking pleasure-seeking, and royal orgies; when the people were spurned, in-

sulted and burdened, — Frederic ascends an absolute throne. He is a young and fashionable philosopher. He professes to believe in nothing that ages of inquiry and study are supposed to have settled; he even ridicules the religious principles of his father. He ardently adopts everything which claims to be a novelty, but is not learned enough to know that what he supposes to be new has been exploded over and over again. He is liberal and tolerant, but does not see the logical sequence of the very opinions he indorses. He is also what is called an accomplished man, since he can play on an instrument, and amuse a dinner-party by jokes and stories. He builds a magnificent theatre, and collects statues, pictures, snuff-boxes, and old china. He welcomes to his court, not stern thinkers, but sneering and amusing philosophers. He employs in his service both Catholics and Protestants alike, since he holds in contempt the religion of both. He is free from animosities and friendships, and neither punishes those who are his enemies nor rewards those who are his friends. He apes reform, but shackles the press; he appoints able men in his service, but only those who will be his unscrupulous tools. He has a fine physique, and therefore is unceasingly active. He flies from one part of his kingdom to another, not to examine morals or education or the state of the people, but to inspect fortresses and to collect camps.

To such a man the development of the resources of his kingdom, the reform of abuses, and educational projects are of secondary importance; he gives his primary attention to raising and equipping armies, having in view the extension of his kingdom by aggressive and unjustifiable wars. He cares little for domestic joys or the society of women, and is incapable of sincere friendship. He has no true admiration for intellectual excellence, although he patronizes literary lions. He is incapable of any sacrifice except for his troops, who worship him, since their interests are identical with his own. In the camp or in the field he spends his time, amusing himself occasionally with the society of philosophers as cynical as himself. He has dreams and visions of military glory, which to him is the highest and greatest on this earth, Charles XII. being his model of a hero

With such views he enters upon a memorable career. His first important public act as king is the seizure of part of the territory of the Bishop of Liège, which he claims as belonging to Prussia. The old bishop is indignant and amazed, but is obliged to submit to a robbery which disgusts Christendom, but is not of sufficient consequence to set it in a blaze.

The next thing he does, of historical importance, is to seize Silesia, a province which belongs to Austria, and contains about twenty thousand square miles, — a fertile and beautiful province, nearly as large as his

own kingdom; it is the highest table-land of Germany, girt around with mountains, hard to attack and easy to defend. So rapid and secret are his movements, that this unsuspecting and undefended country is overrun by his veteran soldiers as easily as Louis XIV. overran Flanders and Holland, and with no better excuse than the French king had. This outrage was an open insult to Europe, as well as a great wrong to Maria Theresa, — supposed by him to be a feeble woman who could not resent the injury. But in this woman he found the great enemy of his life, — a lioness deprived of her whelps, whose wailing was so piteous and so savage that she aroused Europe from lethargy, and made coalitions which shook it to its centre. At first she simply rallied her own troops, and fought single-handed to recover her lost and most valued province. But Frederic, with marvellous celerity and ability, got possession of the Silesian fortresses; the bloody battle of Mollwitz (1741) secured his prey, and he returned in triumph to his capital, to abide the issue of events.

It is not easy to determine whether this atrocious crime, which astonished Europe, was the result of his early passion for military glory, or the inauguration of a policy of aggression and aggrandizement. But it was the signal of an explosion of European politics which ended in one of the most bloody wars of modern

times. "It was," says Carlyle, "the little stone broken loose from the mountain, hitting others, big and little, which again hit others with their leaping and rolling, till the whole mountain-side was in motion under law of gravity."

Maria Theresa appeals to her Hungarian nobles, with her infant in her arms, at a diet of the nation, and sends her envoys to every friendly court. She offers her unscrupulous enemy the Duchy of Limberg and two hundred thousand pounds to relinquish his grasp on Silesia. It is like the offer of Darius to Alexander, and is spurned by the Prussian robber. It is not Limberg he wants, nor money, but Silesia, which he resolves to keep because he wants it, and at any hazard, even were he to jeopardize his own hereditary dominions. The peace of Breslau gives him a temporary leisure, and he takes the waters of Aachen, and discusses philosophy. He is uneasy, but jubilant, for he has nearly doubled the territory and population of Prussia. His subjects proclaim him a hero, with immense pæans. Doubtless, too, he now desires peace, — just as Louis XIV. did after he had conquered Holland, and as Napoleon did when he had seated his brothers on the old thrones of Europe.

But there can be no lasting peace after such outrageous wickedness. The angered kings and princes of Europe are to become the instruments of eternal

justice. They listen to the eloquent cries of the Austrian Empress, and prepare for war, to punish the audacious robber who disturbs the peace of the world and insults all other nationalities. But they are not yet ready for effective war; the storm does not at once break out.

The Austrians however will not wait, and the second Silesian war ensues, in which Saxony joins Austria. Again is Frederic successful, over the combined forces of these two powers, and he retains his stolen province. He is now regarded as a world-hero, for he has fought bravely against vastly superior forces, and is received in Berlin with unbounded enthusiasm. He renews his studies in philosophy, courts literary celebrities, reorganizes his army, and collects forces for a renewed encounter, which he foresees.

He has ten years of repose and preparation, during which he is lauded and flattered, yet retaining simplicity of habits, sleeping but five hours a day, finding time for state dinners, flute-playing, and operas, of all which he is fond; for he was doubtless a man of culture, social, well read if not profound, witty, inquiring, and without any striking defects save tyranny, ambition, parsimony, dissimulation, and lying.

It was during those ten years of rest and military preparation that Voltaire made his memorable visit — his third and last — to Potsdam and Berlin, thirty-two

months of alternate triumph and humiliation. No literary man ever had so successful and brilliant a career as this fortunate and lauded Frenchman, — the oracle of all salons, the arbiter of literary fashions, a dictator in the realm of letters, with amazing fecundity of genius directed into all fields of labor; poet, historian, dramatist, and philosopher; writing books enough to load a cart, and all of them admired and extolled, all of them scattered over Europe, read by all nations; a marvellous worker, of unbounded wit and unexampled popularity, whose greatest literary merit was in the transcendent excellence of his style, for which chiefly he is immortal; a great artist, rather than an original and profound genius whose ideas form the basis of civilizations. The King of Prussia formed an ardent friendship for this king of letters, based on admiration rather than respect; invited him to his court, extolled and honored him, and lavished on him all that he could bestow, outside of political distinction. But no worldly friendship could stand such a test as both were subjected to, since they at last comprehended each other's character and designs. Voltaire perceived the tyranny, the ambition, the heartlessness, the egotism, and the exactions of his royal patron, and despised him while he flattered him; and Frederic on his part saw the hollowness, the meanness, the suspicion, the irritability, the pride, the insincerity, the tricks, the

ingratitude, the baseness, the lies of his distinguished guest, — and their friendship ended in utter vanity. What friendship can last without mutual respect? The friendship of Frederic and Voltaire was hopelessly broken, in spite of the remembrance of mutual admiration and happy hours. It was patched up and mended like a broken vase, but it could not be restored. How sad, how mournful, how humiliating is a broken friendship or an alienated love! It is the falling away of the foundations of the soul, the disappearance forever of what is most to be prized on earth, — its celestial certitudes. A beloved friend may die, but we are consoled in view of the fact that the friendship may be continued in heaven: the friend is not lost to us. But when a friendship or a love is broken, there is no continuance of it through eternity. It is the gloomiest thing to think of in this whole world.

But Frederic was too busy and pre-occupied a man to mourn long for a departed joy. He was absorbed in preparations for war. The sword of Damocles was suspended over his head, and he knew it better than any other man in Europe; he knew it from his spies and emissaries. Though he had enjoyed ten years' peace, he knew that peace was only a truce; that the nations were arming in behalf of the injured empress; that so great a crime as the seizure of Silesia must be visited with a penalty; that there was no escape for

him except in a tremendous life-and-death struggle, which was to be the trial of his life; that defeat was more than probable, since the forces in preparation against him were overwhelming. The curses of the civilized world still pursued him, and in his retreat at Sans-Souci he had no rest; and hence he became irritable and suspicious. The clouds of the political atmosphere were filled with thunderbolts, ready to fall upon him and crush him at any moment; indeed, nothing could arrest the long-gathering storm.

It broke out with unprecedented fury in the spring of 1756. Austria, Russia, Sweden, Saxony, and France were combined to ruin him, — the most powerful coalition of the European powers seen since the Thirty Years' War. His only ally was England, — an ally not so much to succor him as to humble France, and hence her aid was timid and incompetent.

Thus began the famous Seven Years' War, during which France lost her colonial possessions, and was signally humiliated at home, — a war which developed the genius of the elder Pitt, and placed England in the proud position of mistress of the ocean; a war marked by the largest array of forces which Europe had seen since the times of Charles V., in which six hundred thousand men were marshalled under different leaders and nations, to crush a man who had insulted Europe and defied the law of nations and the laws of God. The

coalition represented one hundred millions of people with inexhaustible resources.

Now, it was the memorable resistance of Frederic II. to this vast array of forces, and his successful retention of the province he had seized, which gave him his chief claim as a hero; and it was his patience, his fortitude, his energy, his fertility of resources, and the enthusiasm with which he inspired his troops even after the most discouraging and demoralizing defeats, that won for him that universal admiration as a man which he lived to secure in spite of all his defects and crimes. We admire the resources and dexterity of an outlawed bandit, but we should remember he is a bandit still; and we confound all the laws which hold society together when we cover up the iniquity of a great crime by the successes which have apparently baffled justice. Frederic II., by stealing Silesia, and thus provoking a great war of untold and indescribable miseries, is entitled to anything but admiration, whatever may have been his military genius; and I am amazed that so great a man as Carlyle, with all his hatred of shams, and his clear perceptions of justice and truth, should have whitewashed such a robber. I cannot conceive how the severest critic of the age should have spent the best years of his life in apologies for so bad a man, if his own philosophy had not become radically unsound, based on the abominable doctrine that the end justifies

the means, and that an outward success is the test of right. Far different was Carlyle's treatment of Cromwell. Frederic had no such cause as Cromwell; it was simply his own or his country's aggrandizement by any means, or by any sword he could lay hold of. The chief merit of Carlyle's history is his impartiality and accuracy in describing the details of the contest: the cause of the contest he does not sufficiently reprobate; and all his sympathies seem to be with the unscrupulous robber who fights heroically, rather than with indignant Europe outraged by his crimes. But we cannot separate crime from its consequences; and all the reverses, the sorrows, the perils, the hardships, the humiliations, the immense losses, the dreadful calamities through which Prussia had to pass, which wrung even the heart of Frederic with anguish, were only a merited retribution. The Seven Years' War was a king-hunt, in which all the forces of the surrounding monarchies gathered around the doomed man, making his circle smaller and smaller, and which would certainly have ended in his utter ruin, had he not been rescued by events as unexpected as they were unparalleled. Had some great and powerful foe been converted suddenly into a friend at a critical moment, Napoleon, another unscrupulous robber, might not have been defeated at Waterloo, or died on a rock in the ocean. But Providence, it would seem, who rules the fate of war, had some inscrutable reason

for the rescue of Prussia under Frederic, and the humiliation of France under Napoleon.

The brunt of the war fell of course upon Austria, so that, as the two nations were equally German, it had many of the melancholy aspects of a civil war. But Austria was Catholic and Prussia was Protestant; and had Austria succeeded, Germany possibly to-day would have been united under an irresistible Catholic imperialism, and there would have been no German empire whose capital is Berlin. The Austrians, in this contest, fought bravely and ably, under Prince Carl and Marshal Daun, who were no mean competitors with the King of Prussia for military laurels. But the Austrians fought on the offensive, and the Prussians on the defensive. The former were obliged to manœuvre on the circumference, the latter in the centre of the circle. The Austrians, in order to recover Silesia, were compelled to cross high mountains whose passes were guarded by Prussian soldiers. The war began in offensive operations, and ended in defensive.

The most terrible enemy that Frederic had, next to Austria, was Russia, ruled then by Elizabeth, who had the deepest sympathy with Maria Theresa; but when she died, affairs took a new turn. Frederic was then on the very verge of ruin, — was, as they say, about to be "bagged," — when the new Emperor of Russia conceived a great personal admiration for his genius and

heroism; the Russian enmity was converted to friendship, and the Czar became an ally instead of a foe.

The aid which the Saxons gave to Maria Theresa availed but little. The population, chiefly and traditionally Protestant, probably sympathized with Prussia more than with Austria, although the Elector himself was Catholic, — that inglorious monarch who resembled in his gallantries Louis XV., and in his dilettante tastes Leo X. He is chiefly known for the number of his concubines and his Dresden gallery of pictures.

The aid which the French gave was really imposing, so far as numbers make efficient armies. But the French were not the warlike people in the reign of Louis XV. that they were under Henry IV., or Napoleon Bonaparte. They fought, without the stimulus of national enthusiasm, without a cause, as part of a great machine. They never have been successful in war without the inspiration of a beloved cause. This war had no especial attraction or motive for them. What was it to Frenchmen, so absorbed with themselves, whether a Hohenzollern or a Hapsburg reigned in Germany? Hence, the great armies which the government of France sent to the aid of Maria Theresa were without spirit, and were not even marshalled by able generals. In fact, the French seemed more intent on crippling England than in crushing Frederic. The war

had immense complications. Though France and England were drawn into it, yet both France and England fought more against each other than for the parties who had summoned them to their rescue.

England was Frederic's ally, but her aid was not great directly. She did not furnish him with many troops; she sent subsidies instead, which enabled him to continue the contest. But these were not as great as he expected, or had reason to expect. With all the money he received from Walpole or Pitt he was reduced to the most desperate straits.

One thing was remarkable in that long war of seven years, which strained every nerve and taxed every energy of Prussia: it was carried on by Frederic in hard cash. He did not run in debt; he always had enough on hand in coin to pay for all expenses. But then his subjects were most severely taxed, and the soldiers were poorly paid. If the same economy he used in that war of seven years had been exercised by our Government in its late war, we should not have had any national debt at all at the close of the war, although we probably should have suspended specie payments.

It would not be easy or interesting to attempt to compress the details of a long war of seven years in a single lecture. The records of war have great uniformity, — devastation, taxes, suffering, loss of life and

of property (except by the speculators and government agents), the flight of literature, general demoralization, the lowering of the tone of moral feeling, the ascendency of unscrupulous men, the exaltation of military talents, general grief at the loss of friends, fiendish exultation over victories alternated with depressing despondency in view of defeats, the impoverishment of a nation on the whole, and the sickening conviction, which fastens on the mind after the first excitement is over, of a great waste of life and property for which there is no return, and which sometimes a whole generation cannot restore. Nothing is so dearly purchased as the laurels of the battlefield; nothing is so great a delusion and folly as military glory to the eye of a Christian or philosopher. It is purchased by the tears and blood of millions, and is rebuked by all that is grand in human progress. Only degraded and demoralized peoples can ever rejoice in war; and when it is not undertaken for a great necessity, it fills the world with bitter imprecations. It is cruel and hard and unjust in its nature, and utterly antagonistic to civilization. Its greater evils are indeed overruled; Satan is ever rebuked and baffled by a benevolent Providence. But war is always a curse and a calamity in its immediate results, — and in its ultimate results also, unless waged in defence of some immortal cause.

It must be confessed, war is terribly exciting. The

eyes of the civilized world were concentrated on Frederic II. during this memorable period; and most people anticipated his overthrow. They read everywhere of his marchings and counter-marchings, his sieges and battles, his hair-breadth escapes, and his renewed exertions, from the occupation of Saxony to the battle of Torgau. In this war he was sometimes beaten, as at Kolin; but he gained three memorable victories, — one over the French, at Rossbach; the second, over the Austrians, at Luthen; and the third, over the Russians, at Zorndorf, the most bloody of all his battles. And he gained these victories by outflanking, his attack being the form of a wedge, — learned by the example of Epaminondas, — a device which led to new tactics, and proclaimed Frederic a master of the art of war. But in these battles he simply showed himself to be a great general. It was not until his reverses came that he showed himself a great man, or earned the sympathy which Europe felt for a humiliated monarch, putting forth herculean energies to save his crown and kingdom. His easy and great victories in the first year of the war simply saved him from annihilation; they were not great enough to secure peace. Although thus far he was a conqueror, he had no peace, no rest, and but little hope. His enemies were so numerous and powerful that they could send large reinforcements: he could draw but few. In time it was apparent that he would

be destroyed, whatever his skill and bravery. Had not the Empress Elizabeth died, he would have been conquered and prostrated. After his defeat at Hochkirch, he was obliged to dispute his ground inch by inch, compelled to hide his grief from his soldiers, financially straitened and utterly forlorn; but for a timely subsidy from England he would have been desperate. The fatal battle of Kunnersdorf, in his fourth campaign, when he lost twenty thousand men, almost drove him to despair; and evil fortune continued to pursue him in his fifth campaign, in which he lost some of his strongest fortresses, and Silesia was opened to his enemies. At one time he had only six days' provisions: the world marvelled how he held out. Then England deserted him. He made incredible exertions to avert his doom: everlasting marches, incessant perils; no comforts or luxuries as a king, only sorrows, privations, sufferings; enduring more labors than his soldiers; with restless anxieties and blasted hopes. In his despair and humiliation it is said he recognized God Almighty. In his chastisements and misfortunes, — apparently on the very brink of destruction, and with the piercing cries of misery which reached his ears from every corner of his dominions, — he must, at least, have recognized a Retribution. Still his indomitable will remained. His pride and his self-reliance never deserted him; he would have died rather than have yielded up Silesia until

wrested from him. At last the battle of Torgau, fought in the night, and the death of the Empress of Russia, removed the overhanging clouds, and he was enabled to contend with Austria unassisted by France and Russia. But if Maria Theresa could not recover Silesia, aided by the great monarchies of Europe, what could she do without their aid? So peace came at last, when all parties were wearied and exhausted; and Frederic retained his stolen province at the sacrifice of one hundred and eighty thousand men, and the decline of one tenth of the whole population of his kingdom and its complete impoverishment, from which it did not recover for nearly one hundred years. Prussia, though a powerful military state, became and remained one of the poorest countries of Europe; and I can remember when it was rare to see there, except in the houses of the rich, either a silver fork or a silver spoon; to say nothing of the cheap and frugal fare of the great mass of the people, and their comfortless kind of life, with hardly any physical luxuries except tobacco and beer. It is surprising how, in a poor country, Frederic could have sustained such an exhaustive war without incurring a national debt. Perhaps it was not as easy in those times for kings and states to run into debt as it is now. One of the great refinements of advancing civilization is that we are permitted to bequeath our burdens to future generations. Time only will

show whether this is the wisest course. It is certainly not a wise thing for individuals to do. He who enters on the possession of a heavily mortgaged estate is an embarrassed, perhaps impoverished, man. Frederic, at least, did not leave debts for posterity to pay; he preferred to pay as he went along, whatever were the difficulties.

The real gainer by the war, if gainer there was, was England, since she was enabled to establish a maritime supremacy, and develop her manufacturing and mercantile resources, — much needed in her future struggles to resist Napoleon. She also gained colonial possessions, a foothold in India, and the possession of Canada. This war entangled Europe, and led to great battles, not in Germany merely, but around the world. It was during this war, when France and England were antagonistic forces, that the military genius of Washington was first developed in America. The victories of Clive and Hastings soon after followed in India.

The greatest loser in this war was France: she lost provinces and military prestige. The war brought to light the decrepitude of the Bourbon rule. The marshals of France, with superior forces, were disgracefully defeated. The war plunged France in debt, only to be paid by a "roaring conflagration of anarchies." The logical sequence of the war was in those discontents and taxes which prepared the way for the French

Revolution, — a catastrophe or a new birth, as men differently view it.

The effect of the war on Austria was a loss of prestige, the beginning of the dismemberment of the empire, and the revelation of internal weakness. Though Maria Theresa gained general sympathy, and won great glory by her vigorous government and the heroism of her troops, she was a great loser. Besides the loss of men and money, Austria ceased to be the great threatening power of Europe. From this war England, until the close of the career of Napoleon, was really the most powerful state in Europe, and became the proudest.

As for Prussia, — the principal transgressor and actor, — it is more difficult to see the actual results. The immediate effects of the war were national impoverishment, an immense loss of life, and a fearful demoralization. The limits of the kingdom were enlarged, and its military and political power was established. It became one of the leading states of Continental Europe, surpassed only by Austria, Russia, and France. It led to great standing armies and a desire of aggrandizement It made the army the centre of all power and the basis of social prestige. It made Frederic II. the great military hero of that age, and perpetuated his policy in Prussia. Bismarck is the sequel and sequence of Frederic. It was by aggressive and unscrupulous wars that the Romans were aggrandized, and it was also

by the habits and tastes which successful war created that Rome was ultimately undermined. The Roman empire did not last like the Chinese empire, although at one period it had more glory and prestige. So war both strengthens and impoverishes nations. But I believe that the violation of eternal principles of right ultimately brings a fearful penalty. It may be long delayed, but it will finally come, as in the sequel of the wicked wars of Louis XIV. and Napoleon Bonaparte. Victor Hugo, in his "History of a Great Crime," on the principle of everlasting justice, forewarned "Napoleon the Little" of his future reverses, while nations and kingdoms, in view of his marvellous successes, hailed him as a friend of civilization; and Hugo lived to see the fulfilment of his prophecy. Moreover, it may be urged that the Prussian people, — ground down by an absolute military despotism, the mere tools of an ambitious king, — were not responsible for the atrocious conquests of Frederic II. The misrule of monarchs does not bring permanent degradation on a nation, unless it shares the crimes of its monarch, — as in the case of the Romans, when the leading idea of the people was military conquest, from the very commencement of their state. The Prussians in the time of Frederic were a sincere, patriotic, and religious people. They were simply enslaved, and suffered the poverty and misery which were entailed by war.

After Frederic had escaped the perils of the Seven Years' War, it is surprising he should so soon have become a party to another atrocious crime, — the division and dismemberment of Poland. But here both Russia and Austria were also participants.

"Sarmatia fell, unwept, without a crime."

And I am still more amazed that Carlyle should cover up this crime with his sophistries. No man in ordinary life would be justified in seizing his neighbor's property because he was weak and his property was mismanaged. We might as well justify Russia in attempting to seize Turkey, although such a crime may be overruled in the future good of Europe. But Carlyle is an Englishman; and the English seized and conquered India because they wanted it, not because they had a right to it. The same laws which bind individuals also binds kings and nations. Free nations from the obligations which bind individuals, and the world would be an anarchy. Grant that Poland was not fit for self-government, this does not justify its political annihilation. The heart of the world exclaimed against that crime at the time, and the injuries of that unfortunate state are not yet forgotten. Carlyle says the "partition of Poland was an operation of Almighty Providence and the eternal laws of Nature." — a key to his whole philosophy, which means

if it means anything, that as great fishes swallow up the small ones, and wild beasts prey upon each other, and eagles and vultures devour other birds, it is all right for powerful nations to absorb the weak ones, as the Romans did. Might does not make right by the eternal decrees of God Almighty, written in the Bible and on the consciences of mankind. Politicians, whose primal law is expediency, may justify such acts as public robbery, for they are political Jesuits, — always were, always will be; and even calm statesmen, looking on the overruling of events, may palliate; but to enlightened Christians there is only one law, "Do unto others as ye would that they should do unto you." Nor can Christian civilization reach an exalted plane until it is in harmony with the eternal laws of God. Mr. Carlyle glibly speaks of Almighty Providence favoring robbery; here he utters a falsehood, and I do not hesitate to say it, great as is his authority. God says, "Thou shalt not steal; Thou shalt not covet anything which is thy neighbor's, . . . for he is a jealous God, visiting the sins of the fathers upon the children, to the third and fourth generation." We must set aside the whole authority of divine revelation, to justify any crime openly or secretly committed. The prosperity of nations, in the long run, is based on righteousness; not on injustice, cruelty, and selfishness.

It cannot be denied that Frederic well managed his stolen property. He was a man of ability, of enlightened views, of indefatigable industry, and of an iron will. I would as soon deny that Cromwell did not well govern the kingdom which he had seized, on the plea of revolutionary necessity and the welfare of England, for he also was able and wise. But what was the fruit of Cromwell's well-intended usurpation? — a hideous reaction, the return of the Stuarts, the dissipation of his visionary dreams. And if the states which Frederic seized, and the empire he had founded in blood and carnage had been as well prepared for liberty as England was, the consequences of his ambition might have been far different.

But Frederic did not so much aim at the development of national resources, — the aim of all immortal statesmen, — as at the growth and establishment of a military power. He filled his kingdom and provinces with fortresses and camps and standing armies. He cemented a military monarchy. As a wise executive ruler, the King of Prussia enforced law and order, was economical in his expenditures, and kept up a rigid discipline; even rewarded merit, and was friendly to learning. And he showed many interesting personal qualities, — for I do not wish to make him out a monster, only as a great man who did wicked things, and things which even cemented for the time the power

of Prussia. He was frugal and unostentatious. Like Charlemagne, he associated with learned men. He loved music and literature; and he showed an amazing fortitude and patience in adversity, which called out universal admiration. He had a great insight into shams, was rarely imposed upon, and was scrupulous and honest in his dealings as an individual. He was also a fascinating man when he unbent; was affable, intelligent, accessible, and unstilted. He was an admirable talker, and a tolerable author. He always sympathized with intellectual excellence. He surrounded himself with great men in all departments. He had good taste and a severe dignity, and despised vulgar people; had no craving for fast horses, and held no intercourse with hostlers and gamblers even if these gamblers had the respectable name of brokers. He punished all public thieves; so that his administration at least was dignified and respectable and secured the respect of Europe and the admiration of men of ability. The great warrior was also a great statesman, and never made himself ridiculous, never degraded his position and powers, and could admire and detect a man of genius, even when hidden from the world. He was a Tiberius, but not a Nero fiddling over national calamities, and surrounding himself with stage-players, buffoons, and idiots.

But here his virtues ended. He was cold, selfish,

dissembling, hard-hearted, ungrateful, ambitious, unscrupulous, without faith in either God or man; so sceptical in religion that he was almost an atheist. He was a disobedient son, a heartless husband, a capricious friend, and a selfish self-idolater. While he was the friend of literary men, he patronized those who were infidel in their creed. He was not a religious persecutor, because he regarded all religions as equally false and equally useful. He was social among convivial and learned friends, but cared little for women or female society. His latter years, though dignified and quiet, an idol in all military circles, with an immense fame, and surrounded with every pleasure and luxury at Sans-Souci, were still sad and gloomy, like those of most great men whose leading principle of life was vanity and egotism, — like those of Solomon, Charles V., and Louis XIV. He heard the distant rumblings, if he did not live to see the lurid fires, of the French Revolution. He had been deceived in Voltaire, but he could not mistake the logical sequence of the ideas of Rousseau, — those blasting ideas which would sweep away all feudal institutions and all irresponsible tyrannies. When Mirabeau visited him he was a quaking, suspicious, irritable, capricious, unhappy old man, though adored by his soldiers to the last, — for those were the only people he ever loved, those who were willing to die for him, those who built up

his throne: and when he died, I suppose he was sincerely lamented by his army and his generals and his nobility, for with him began the greatness of Prussia as a military power. So far as a life devoted to the military and political aggrandizement of a country makes a man a patriot, Frederic the Great will receive the plaudits of those men who worship success, and who forget the enormity of unscrupulous crimes in the outward glory which immediately resulted, — yea, possibly of contemplative statesmen who see in the rise of a new power an instrument of the Almighty for some inscrutable end. To me his character and deeds have no fascination, any more than the fortunate career of some one of our modern millionnaires would have to one who took no interest in finance. It was doubtless grateful to the dying King of Prussia to hear the plaudits of his idolaters, as he stood on the hither shores of eternity; but his view of the spectators as they lined those shores must have been soon lost sight of, and their cheering and triumphant voices unheard and disregarded, as the bark, in which he sailed alone, put forth on the unknown ocean, to meet the Eternal Judge of the living and the dead.

We leave now the man who won so great a fame, to consider briefly his influence. In two respects, it seems to me, it has been decided and impressive.

In the first place, he gave an impulse to rationalistic inquiries in Germany; and many there are who think this was a good thing. He made it fashionable to be cynical and doubtful. Being ashamed of his own language, and preferring the French, he encouraged the current and popular French literature, which in his day, under the guidance of Voltaire, was materialistic and deistical. He embraced a philosophy which looked to secondary rather than primal causes, which scouted any revelations that could not be explained by reason, or reconciled with scientific theories, — that false philosophy which intoxicated Franklin and Jefferson as well as Hume and Gibbon, and which finally culminated in Diderot and D'Alembert; the philosophy which became fashionable in German universities, and whose nearest approach was that of the exploded Epicureanism of the Ancients. Under the patronage of the infidel court, the universities of Germany became filled with rationalistic professors, and the pulpits with dead and formal divines; so that the glorious old Lutheranism of Prussia became the coldest and most lifeless of all the forms which Protestantism ever assumed. Doubtless, great critics and scholars arose under the stimulus of that unbounded religious speculation which the King encouraged; but they employed their learning in pulling down rather than supporting the pillars of the ancient orthodoxy. And so rapidly did rationalism

spread in Northern Germany, that it changed its great lights into *illuminati*, who spurned what was revealed unless it was in accordance with their speculations and sweeping criticism. I need not dwell on this undisguised and blazing fact, on the rationalism which became the fashion in Germany, and which spread so disastrously over other countries, penetrating even into the inmost sanctuaries of theological instruction. All this may be progress; but to my mind it tended to extinguish the light of faith, and fill the seats of learning with cynics and unbelieving critics. It was bad enough to destroy the bodies of men in a heartless war; it was worse to nourish those principles which poisoned the soul, and spread doubt and disguised infidelities among the learned classes.

But the influence of Frederic was seen in a more marked manner in the inauguration of a national policy directed chiefly to military aggrandizement. If there ever was a purely military monarchy, it is Prussia; and this kingdom has been to Europe what Sparta was to Greece. All the successors of Frederic have followed out his policy with singular tenacity. All their habits and associations have been military. The army has been the centre of their pride, ambition, and hope. They have made their country one vast military camp. They have exempted no classes from military services; they have honored and exalted the army more than

any other interest. The principal people of the land are generals. The resources of the kingdom are expended in standing armies; and these are a perpetual menace. A network of military machinery controls all other pursuits and interests. The peasant is a military slave. The student of the university can be summoned to a military camp. Precedence in rank is given to military men over merchant princes, over learned professors, over distinguished jurists. The genius of the nation has been directed to the perfection of military discipline and military weapons. The government is always prepared for war, and has been rarely averse to it. It has ever been ready to seize a province or pick a quarrel. The late war with France was as much the fault of Prussia as of the government of Napoleon. The great idea of Prussia is military aggrandizement; it is no longer a small kingdom, but a great empire, more powerful than either Austria or France. It believes in new annexations, until all Germany shall be united under a Prussian Kaiser. What Rome became, Prussia aspires to be. The spirit, the animus, of Prussia is military power. Travel in that kingdom, — everywhere are soldiers, military schools, camps, arsenals, fortresses, reviews. And this military spirit, evident during the last hundred years, has made the military classes arrogant, austere, mechanical, contemptuous. This spirit pervades the nation. It despises

other nations as much as France did in the last century, or England after the wars of Napoleon.

But the great peculiarity of this military spirit is seen in the large standing armies, which dry up the resources of the nation and make war a perpetual necessity, at least a perpetual fear. It may be urged that these armies are necessary to the protection of the state, — that if they were disbanded, then France, or some other power, would arise and avenge their injuries, and cripple a state so potent to do evil. It may be so; but still the evils generated by these armies must be fatal to liberty, and antagonistic to those peaceful energies which produce the highest civilization. They are fatal to the peaceful virtues. The great Schiller has said: —

> "There exists
> An higher than the warrior's excellence.
> Great deeds of violence, adventures wild,
> And wonders of the moment, — these are not they
> Which generate the high, the blissful,
> And the enduring majesty.

I do not disdain the virtues which are developed by war; but great virtues are seldom developed by war, unless the war is stimulated by love of liberty or the conservation of immortal privileges worth more than the fortunes or the lives of men. A nation incapable of being roused in great necessities soon becomes in-

significant and degenerate, like Greece when it was incorporated with the Roman empire; but I have no admiration of a nation perpetually arming and perpetually seeking political aggrandizement, when the great ends of civilization are lost sight of. And this is what Frederic sought, and his successors who cherished his ideas. The legacy he bequeathed to the world was not emancipating ideas, but the policy of military aggrandizement. And yet, has civilization no higher aim than the imitation of the ancient Romans? Can nations progressively become strong by ignoring the spirit of Christianity? Is a nation only to thrive by adopting the sentiments peculiar to robbers and bandits? I know that Prussia has not neglected education, or science, or industrial energy; but these have been made subservient to military aims. The highest civilization is that which best develops the virtues of the heart and the energies of the mind: on these the strength of man is based. It may be necessary for Prussia, in the complicated relations of governments, and in view of possible dangers, to sustain vast standing armies; but the larger these are, the more do they provoke other nations to do the same, and to eat out the vitals of national wealth. That nation is the greatest which seeks to reduce, rather than augment, forces which prey upon its resources and which are a perpetual menace. And hence the vast standing armies which conquerors

seek to maintain are not an aid to civilization, but on the other hand tend to destroy it; unless by civilization and national prosperity are meant an ever-expanding policy of military aggrandizement, by which weaker and unoffending states may be gradually absorbed by irresistible despotism, like that of the Romans, whose final and logical development proves fatal to all other nationalities and liberties, — yea, to literature and art and science and industry, the extinction of which is the moral death of an empire, however grand and however boastful, only to be succeeded by new creations, through the fires of successive wars and hateful anarchies.

In one point, and one alone, I see the Providence which permitted the military aggrandizement to which Frederic and his successors aimed; and that is, in furnishing a barrier to the future conquests of a more barbarous people, — I mean the Russians; even as the conquests of Charlemagne presented a barrier to the future irruptions of barbarous tribes on his northern frontier. Russia — that rude, demoralized, Slavonic empire — cannot conquer Europe until it has first destroyed the political and military power of Germany. United and patriotic, Germany can keep at present the Russians at bay, and direct the stream of invasion to the East rather than the south; so that Europe will not become either Cossack or French, as Napoleon predicted. In this light the military genius and power of

Germany, which Frederic did so much to develop, may be designed for the protection of European civilization and the Protestant religion.

But I will not speculate on the aims of Providence, or the evil to be overruled for good. With my limited vision, I can only present facts and their immediate consequences. I can only deduce the moral truths which are logically to be drawn from a career of wicked ambition. These truths are a part of that moral wisdom which experience confirms, and which alone should be the guiding lesson to all statesmen and all empires. Let us pursue the right, and leave the consequences to Him who rules the fate of war, and guides the nations to the promised period when men shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and universal peace shall herald the reign of the Saviour of the world.

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